WANTED

AN ARISTOCRACY

TAIT MORLEY

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With all affection

Tait Marley

May 1928

WANTED—AN ARISTOCRACY

AGENTS ABROAD

AMERICA	THE MACMILLAN COMPANY 60, FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK
AUSTRALASIA	OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS 205, FLINDERS LANE, MELBOURNE
CANADA	THE MACMILLAN CO. OF CANADA, LTD. ST. MARTIN'S HOUSE, 70, BOND STREET, TORONTO. 2
INDIA	MACMILLAN & COMPANY LTD. 276, HORNBY ROAD, BOMBAY 294, BOW BAZAAR STREET, CALCUTTA NORTH BEACH ROAD, MADRAS

WANTED

AN ARISTOCRACY

SOME QUESTIONS OF TO-DAY

BY

TAIT MORLEY

A. & C. BLACK, LTD.

4, 5 & 6, SOHO SQUARE, LONDON, W. 1

1928

Printed in Great Britain by
THE WHITEFRIARS PRESS, LTD., LONDON AND TONBRIDGE.

To

FREDERICK HITCHCOCK MORLEY

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WANTED—AN ARISTOCRACY

I

THE JOB

THEY pass through the office all day. True, some of them come again and again, but there seldom is anything to wait for. The secretaries of the employment exchanges make that clear enough.

Most of them want work: "a job—*anything!*" No one asks for "positions" or "posts" any more; that sort of thing has gone out. The newcomers, volubly explanatory, sit in the chair indicated by the secretary. The old-timers stand by the desk in silence until that official, after running through a few index-cards and papers, looks up and shakes his head. "Sorry; nothing for you as yet"—whereupon the old-timer drags wearily away. The very name "Employment Exchange" brings in all kinds: the restless, the misfits, the jobless. All day they come and go.

Occasionally a man comes in who looks as if

life had hitherto held for him rather better things. A pleasant individual: obviously a gentleman; obviously an amateur at job-hunting, for he will not only seat himself, unasked, but will plunge into an enumeration of all the things he cannot do. "Dashed if I know what I *would* be any good at!" he is likely to declare with engaging candour.

The secretary listens gravely, as he listens twenty times a day, to the same story. The routine questions: "Have you had any office experience?" "Have you any special knowledge?" "Any special training?" are all answered with an amused negative. There will be nothing to differentiate this job-seeker from a thousand others, except his name and address.

The next step in the routine is simple. An application form is pushed across the desk, with the request that it be filled out. In eight cases out of ten the new client will take the little slip of blue paper in his fingers, very gingerly, turning it over and holding it at arm's length. "Oh, I say, what's this? What do you want me to do with it?'

"Fill it out."

"But I can't, you know!" By this time he

will be reading the slip with an air of detached amusement. " I can't do any of these things, you know: book-keeping, typewriting, surveying ! " He almost always reads the form out aloud, apparently under the impression that the secretary may like to know what is in it.

" If you will be so good as to fill out that form we shall then have your application on file."

" Right-O ! " The seeker after a job (" *anything !* ") will rise at once. Being a gentleman, he can take a hint. Perhaps he may feel a temporary drooping of his spirits, but he will be neither disconcerted nor discouraged, yet. His one idea is that he must hurry up and fill out this rummy form, and then perhaps these johnnies can find a billet for him. Nodding a cheerful good-day he will stuff the precious paper into his pocket and leave the office.

It is no laughing matter. He is asking for work, not charity. *Some kind of a job !* He has done other jobs before, and done them well, even if they have not been solely for the purpose of earning bread and butter. If he has the *qualities* of breeding and education he should be able to find a definite place in any intelligent economic scheme : a place requiring the

staying powers of breeding, or that breadth of view which comes from a liberal education and seldom is achieved merely by energy and good intentions. One of to-day's many problems is how to *use* these qualities of breeding and education: how to *prevent* the waste of them.

For in our anxiety to conserve such qualities of the upper classes as we believe to be good—we forget that our indifference to acute and remediable suffering amongst the proletariat places in jeopardy all that we most long to defend. When we allow our natural apathies and what we excuse as our "natural" prejudices to prevent us from *informing* ourselves —or even from keeping an open mind in regard to to-day's pressing social and economic questions, we are in grave danger of letting the interests of Society fall into the hands of men of no education nor breadth of view whatsoever. It is becoming increasingly apparent that unless the majority of us drop our present light-hearted insouciance in regard to many vital problems, men of shortsighted vision will, in their blind struggle for what they consider justice, waste and destroy much that the world can ill do without. Our jobless gentleman, asking for work with bread attached, has

a quality and a value of his own. He is quite willing, moreover, to do good work and to take his chance of the butter. Whether this is the end of a certain amateurishness as it has been, or the beginning of a new order that may be, nobody as yet knows.

He is asking for work, but this is not, after all, what he actually needs. What he needs is the payment for doing that work, since only by its means can he buy food and shelter and clothing for himself and for those dependent on him. If he is an intelligent human being he will certainly hope that the employment offered him may pay him reasonable wages and allow him reasonable leisure. He realises perfectly that as he has had no particular training he may have to put up with some fairly uninteresting routine work ; and he has little expectation, therefore, of being able to throw his whole soul into this job with the glad enthusiasm for drudgery so seldom met with except in Utopian literature. At the same time, he does not feel in the least called upon, in peacetime, to engage in unnecessarily distasteful occupation " for the sake of England," cheerily as he endured the miseries of the trenches during the War. And he sincerely hopes that,

failing what he considers reasonably congenial work or fairly adequate wages, the routine employment which is likely to fall to his lot may, by reason of its shorter hours, leave him some leisure for the interests of his choice. These, to his mind, are perfectly natural desires, and he would be surprised and indignant to have them identified with what he has always believed to be the " exorbitant demands " of Labour !

But, unfortunately, unless he is unusually muscular, exceptionally fortunate, and still in his early manhood, there is no job, routine or otherwise, to be found for him. Men of training and experience, as well as men of education, are walking the streets, hunting work and meeting starvation. Under the economic system as we know it to-day (although few serious economists consider the word " system " a happy definition) let such a man but lose his financial foothold and he will find that the very qualities that have taken generations to breed are, thanks to the present industrial chaos, a handicap. He will discover that his liberal education is apparently valueless—excepting to himself, in so far as it may furnish him with a philosophy. But a philosophy, however comforting to the individual, is of

little use to his starving family. What this man needs is work fitted to his capacity and rewarded according to that capacity. Unless he is put in the way of finding such work, any qualities that he may have are wasted.

He is not, of course, a " genius." We have always been told that *nothing* can hold the genius down, and in our complacent self-absorption and Will to Believe whatever makes us feel most comfortable we have almost believed it. No deadly monotony of drudgery, no overwork, no anxiety, no degradation of misery can affect this sturdy genius of our dreams. We infinitely prefer to think that our mute inglorious Miltons must be themselves at fault : we have not the slightest intention of letting them blame Society. In any case, we do not let their troubles grieve us, because most of us *prefer* our Miltons mute. We are content, therefore, that infinite genius should be necessary in order even to demonstrate itself.

The man out for a job, however, is not likely to be possessed of that genius which can surmount all obstacles. He is much more likely to be that hackneyed and altogether uninteresting thing—a misfit. In our present economic

muddle the out-of-work problem is greatly complicated by him and his fellow misfits who, having lost their financial foothold, swirl helplessly about in a maelstrom of bewilderment and anxiety. We bring up our boys in a hit-or-miss manner as regards their future usefulness, trusting that our family tradition—whether it be the Services or the Church, the land or the Bar, the City or the shop, the carpenter's bench or the factory—may, somehow, sometime, provide an " opening." All we can hope for under present conditions is an opening into something more or less suitable—perhaps not as regards the boy himself, but suited, if possible, to his family tradition, whatever that tradition may happen to be. Into this opening, therefore, our youngster is shoved unless he has early developed a mind of his own and protests too violently ; and it is to this not very intelligent start that we owe the greater number of our square pegs tightly wedged or loosely rattling in the wrong holes.

However, the young are young, and there is a possibility that, even if misplaced at the beginning, they may later be able to readjust matters for themselves. The older man who suddenly finds himself without employment

is in a very different position, and the great need of to-day is not only *work*, but work remotely approaching some suitability to the worker ; work designed to bring the best, not the worst, out of him. Such a consummation—devoutly wished by everybody—is quite unlikely to be arrived at by political upheaval, or even by economic legislation unless the great mass of public opinion is prepared to be in sympathy with such legislation. So-called " reforms " fail, not because they are wrong in principle, but because they are impossible to put into practice when the unreflecting majority only rouses itself from indifference in order to express querulous antagonism.

Public opinion itself must first be educated, otherwise it is idle to hope for betterment. We cannot escape our responsibility : *we* are the individual units which form that great body of opinion. Only by deliberate effort to inform ourselves and to think intelligently can we hope to work toward those economic policies which, by encouraging the willing co-operation of the individual, may function also toward the betterment of the race.

But the great majority of us do not bestir ourselves about such things. We content our-

selves with the academic hope that some day, in spite of past experience, things will somehow right themselves. We admit that there are inevitable misfits and unnecessary tragedies among the new poor; but we do nothing beyond an occasional lift to a friend, and a somewhat vague expression of sympathy. Now that taxation has left us less surplus for charity, we even find the apparently eternal problems of the "old" poor somewhat irritating, and are content to dismiss them as responsible for (and the responsibility of) the "dole."

We are too prone to shut our eyes to the fact that behind the gray words "unemployment problem" lurks the *red menace*, and that the reality of this menace is fairly certain to be commensurate with the intensity of the suffering which gives rise to it. Few of us trouble to make any investigation as to why education and experience find it hard to regain their foothold, or inquire into the discontented workman's reason for discontent: we find it easier to assume that there is *no* good reason, and we satisfy ourselves by remarking sunnily that inequalities of wealth, like the inequalities of health and happiness, are in the nature of things. With this excellent if platitudinous

observation, we turn away from our real responsibility, our real problem—that of thinking toward the betterment of the necessary relationships of society, to the end that health and a modicum of comfort and happiness may be made possible for more of us, even although they can never be made certain for any of us, nor, even if secured, can by any stretch of the imagination be " equalised." No matter what direction any advance in economic organization may take, one of its aims is likely to be that compensation shall be made more commensurate with the value of the work performed ; but what that value will be must always depend on the inequalities of the human brains behind it. Nature's law of inequality, however, does not cancel our responsibility as to the policies pursued by organized society. We ourselves form this society : it is our acquiescence that does the organizing. Whether that acquiescence is based on honest belief that we are doing the best that we possibly can depends on our intelligence—but such a conclusion is, too often, a reflection on that intelligence.

Now the average man dislikes what he calls " theorizing." He lives in perpetual fear of the

word " panacea." So obsessed is he in regard to his dislike of these words that he shuts his mind to any possible reflection or discussion aiming at remedy for what even he is obliged to admit are grave evils. The result is, not the steadying influence of well-thought-out demurs to the unpractical dreams of would-be reformers: but, rather, a heavy block of prejudice against which serious economists, industrial experts and experienced men of progressive outlook are alike unable to prevail. As a consequence, the " reds " declaring that nothing short of force is likely to overcome this apathy, construe such inertia on our part to indicate a need, on their part, for direct action. Our reply is to insist on the necessity for *time ;* but the intelligent among us are uncomfortably aware that, thanks to the lethargy of the uninformed, many changes that ought to be accomplished within a decade may not be achieved for a decade of generations.

Yet both history and commonsense tell us that our present methods cannot be final, but must necessarily be evolving, as all other methods have evolved and changed before them. Some of us may hold honest doubts as to the value of certain proposed innovations ;

but more of us ought to be careful that we are not holding merely *dis*-honest objections to any change. The average man clings with amazing optimism to his belief in the *status quo*. "*Whatever is, is right.*" Any change, to his mind, is likely to be fraught with peril. His fears are only for dangers which may possibly result: he has no fears whatever for the dangers which actually exist. Because of this terror of other's action—and lack of terror regarding his own *in*action—he furnishes the "reds" with a dangerous incentive toward mischief.

This attitude on the part of the average man is inevitable. He has neither the time nor the opportunity to apply himself to economics, even if he has the inclination. Yet he is important, because he constitutes that great majority which, if without intelligent leadership, tends to make Democracy a blight rather than a blessing. Democracy (however excellent as a human sentiment) is apt to prove unsatisfactory as State machinery: being unwieldy as regards efficiency, and pliable as regards mischief. The need of Society to-day is to be led, *as a whole*, by an aristocracy o *intelligence* and of *intention*, capable of unsel-

fishness, and morally pledged to disinterestedness. The problems with which we are confronted are too vital to be left solely to the game of politics, or to well-wishers of charitable intentions ; financiers preoccupied with the bank rate and credit controls ; tradesmen engrossed by market conditions ; or to working men prejudiced by grievances, and unable, through lack of any liberal education, to take broad views of those aspects of the matter which do not immediately concern themselves. Questions of such moment to the race ought surely to be the supreme concern of her *gentlemen*—for the qualities of both a man and a gentleman are needed if such problems are to be approached with singleness of heart.

It is the waste of intelligence, of experience, of the goodwill that might be had in co-operation, that is the real defect of our present industrial system. We cannot evade responsibility by shrugging our shoulders and murmuring platitudes about " unavoidable conditions." We are altogether too apathetic to a needless crushing of human faculties in the economic mill : we content ourselves too easily by asserting that such individuals as are possessed of superior ability or creative impulse

will, somehow, manage to scramble out of the economic hopper. We shut our eyes to the fact that creative impulses cannot be expected from men whose over-long and monotonous routine work has turned them into machines ; nor can creative impulses be expected when the constant anxiety over the elementary needs of life absorbs all energy. Too narrow a life precludes all likelihood of any breadth of view ; patience cannot be expected from starving citizens. Because certain sections of labour are able to command good conditions and excellent wages, we are too apt to ignore the straits of the millions enjoying neither. Under our present industrial system it is inevitable that every new invention, every improvement in methods of production, and every economy in commercial organization should throw hitherto indispensable employees out of the work which stands between them and starvation. Shortsighted as have been many of the objections made by Labour to such improvements, the premise on which such objections are based is incontrovertible : that the evils attendant on the resulting unemployment may cancel (for the worker, at least) any benefits accruing from increased facility of production.

The working man is not constituted to see much farther than that, under our present policies, there are not nearly enough jobs to go around, and the man of education who has been unfortunate enough to lose his financial foothold is cynically permitted to prove this for himself.

Our man of education, however, is encouraged to state his case. We realize his plight, and we agree, heartily, that it is a beastly shame. We sympathize with and approve of any steps he may take to safeguard his interests. We are ready to stand shoulder to shoulder with him against any Labour machinations which might militate against these interests. At the same time, even in those commercial circles where a certain seemly thought for the morrow is the basis of all claims to sanity and respectability, irritation is shown when Labour, in its turn, desires to exercise its brains and its foresight. For the chief grievance to-day, with the working man of intelligence, is that he is treated as a child: neither consulted as to what experience has taught him is the best method in his work, nor allowed to share the responsibility of producing, or the rewards of having produced, profits. For extra efforts he

feels he gets neither reward nor thanks, unless those extra efforts involve an overtime charge which, in its turn, is often exasperating to the employer. It is of little use to tell the worker that increased productivity will improve his condition, or that it is his trades-union—not his employer—which, by restricting his energies, hampers this productivity. *His* mind is made up. He is convinced that the " ca' canny " policy of the Unions has been made necessary because of an acute need to *circumvent*. The working man of intelligence realizes perfectly that industry requires executive control ; but he is insisting that he cannot see why the owner and the investor should have the right to the whole (instead of merely their proportionate share) of resulting profits. And the working man of intelligence asserts he is willing, granted certain conditions, to take his share of losses.

There is right on both sides, if we will but see it. There is reason on both sides, if we will but listen to it. But the majority of us allow a class prejudice, a party bias or even a catchy epigram to shut our minds. The most tragic thing about most of our present economic maladjustment is that it is unnecessary.

Public attention, public interest and public enlightenment could all be secured if an aristocracy of responsibility and intelligence, forsaking less vital interests, would determinedly concentrate on the solving of such problems. The tragedy of the needless misfit ; extreme poverty, preventable disease, and much of the sordid drabness of the over-long workaday routine could be done away with in a single generation if such an aristocracy of intention would only bestow on these human questions some of the time now absorbed by sport—devoted to the cultivation of *comparatively* unimportant appreciations in the sacred name of Art—or even spent in smugly comfortable defence of the *status quo*. *Noblesse oblige :* there can be no aristocracy without responsibility ; and to move with the times is part of that responsibility.

We do better by other countries than we do by our own. We bring to the problems of the East a patience and a tolerance that are conspicuously lacking in our attitude to the unrest at home. We make it our job—in other lands—to see that the " native " gets a hearing. In dealing with him we are not perpetually obsessed by our own interests, or by fear for

our own skins. Our Colonial policy is *fairplay*, and those who, in those far lands, so successfully carry the White Man's Burden—make it their job to find out what *is* fairplay.

Our opinions depend on our information; our ideals depend on ourselves. But most of us, by thinking nothing whatever, caring nothing whatever, and doing nothing whatever about any wrongs which neither affect nor disturb ourselves, succeed, by means of such apathy, in perpetuating much evil. Irresponsibility mounted on a soap box is no more dangerous than irresponsibility in an easy-chair, and is possibly even less so: the easy-chair oracles having, numerically, the advantage.

Nature, in pursuing her policy of the survival of the fittest, has demonstrated again and again that the best start a man can have is—ancestry: to come of good stock. Such a start, she says, is better than a mere heritage of health, since to be physically fit is not by any means her only definition of fitness for survival. Infinitely better than wealth is such a heritage—and a help, at least, toward happiness. As a unit of permanent value to society the man of ancestry ought to be able to best

the man from the street—*other conditions being equal.* But if he does not: if all he has to show for his excellent start in life is a tendency to go to sleep under his Family Tree, then we, having had time to learn our lesson regarding cause and effect, should help toward rather than hinder the working of that social evolution which aims at service for the race. Let our misfit have his chance—but also *let him use it.* The refusal to pamper the unfit is not merely a punishment for the individual; it could also be a remedy for the nation, especially as regards much of the social disorder of which poverty is merely a symptom.

A conservative attitude toward proposed change is good, provided that we make an attempt, at least, to show some sort of intelligence as to the application of this excellent principle. Too many of us, however, seem intently desirous of conserving the wrong thing. If on the side of Labour (to the extent that all other sympathies are excluded) we refuse to admit the obvious *limitations* of the proletariat, even when energetic, able and well intentioned. If on the side of ancestry (to the extent that all other sympathies are excluded) we are somewhat snobbishly over-

valiant in our loyalty to customs which not only throw unnecessary difficulties in the way of ability, but which also have too marked a tendency to prop up the well-born incompetent whose sole merit lies in his inheritance of an ancient name. The majority of us cannot bear the idea that the holder of such a name shall be judged on merit alone, or allowed to suffer for it if merit is lacking. Yet we are belittling the aristocratic ideal if all we expect of it are the elementary virtues of courage and honesty, and an over-cultivation of the sensuous emotions connected with the arts. Lately, however, Mother Nature has boxed our ears and bade us hurry up and learn our lesson. "You'll have to grow up *some* day, children: you can't stay little snobs for ever!" She repeatedly reminds us to *put first things first;* that the proper study of mankind is *man*. As we are already in possession of a Scriptural hint that a man may be judged as his brother's keeper, surely one of the major duties facing us is to compass a more enlightened apprenticeship, for all of us, to life itself.

As things are, however, we have nothing to offer our misfits except a recommendation to cultivate, somehow, a cheerful philosophy!

Industry, as we know it in England to-day, can only provide for a limited number of jobs carrying with them any hope of contentment. Were it to attempt to provide more it could not, under our existing policies, continue to pay, at the ratio at present demanded of it, in the three directions now required of it—to the owner or shareholder, to the executive force, and to the manual worker. So we are insisting that productivity—increased productivity—must be achieved somehow or other, and we are resentful that the workman does not immediately put his shoulder to the wheel and work heartily for what we sincerely believe to be his (and our) best interests. The workman, however, refuses to show any particular enthusiasm for means he dislikes toward an end that he is not sure that he wants. He is perfectly wideawake as to the economic issues, and he realizes that the general public, himself included, would not be the sole (nor indeed the chief) gainer from any such altruistic fillip to industry. He feels that increased production would only result in higher dividends—not in lower prices ; nor can industry itself, unless reorganized upon a co-operative basis, offer him any assurance that his fears are groundless.

The consequence is that his resentment is aroused, and unfortunately for everybody he governs his activities accordingly. That such a deadlock should be possible is, from the standpoint of efficiency, the weak point of our existing system. The present scarcity of work, therefore, is not likely to be lessened in any immediate future by increased productivity unless we can, somehow or other, persuade the working man that such added efforts on his part will result in benefit to *him*. Our unemployment problem is likely to remain acute until, after conscientious and painstaking deliberation by the best brains of the country, supported by sustained attention and interest from more of us, certain modifications of our present policies are arranged for with a view to securing more intelligent methods. As things are, it is inevitable that the weary seeker after employment, from whatever class he comes (unless he has special qualifications, and unless those qualifications are such as are likely to find a ready market), must sink, as he now does, even below the ranks of the unemployed to the dangerous mob of the unemployable.

Alice's White Rabbit, scurrying through the dark passages and muttering " Unimportant—

important—*I never can remember which is which!*"—was doing his thinking in terms enforced by the limitations of his white rabbit-hood. We are not (not all of us) thus limited, so we can, if we choose, come to some sort of an understanding as to what things *are* important, and busy ourselves accordingly.

That they want work—not charity—might even come first! But we seldom trouble to inform ourselves; it is easier to pass by on the other side.

II

THE JOB AS A LARK

To hunt for work day after day without finding it, will break any man's spirit, and reduce him, eventually, to the ranks of the unemployable. Popular impressions notwithstanding, every hungry out-of-work is by no means entitled—or able—to draw the " dole." Although mistaken enough as a permanent economic policy, the dole, like any other insurance, is subject to definite restrictions, and unless the jobless workman is qualified to draw this unemployment insurance pay, he will have to depend on the odd job to keep him from starvation. He will find, however, that many of such jobs are already filled—and filled by gentlemen : our changed conditions and our unemployment distress so having affected all classes that former differentiations in regard to work are no longer in force. Already we are in the way of gaining much information, not only as to how the other half

lives, but also as to why, occasionally, the jobless half prefers to die.

Now for a man of breeding and education to be obliged, *by bitter necessity*, to accept unsuitable work is bad enough. That such a waste of certain qualities should be possible is a grave indictment of the economic policy which permits such extravagance. But although we are perfectly willing to admit that our jobless—from all classes—are driven to miserable straits, the majority of us refuse to recognize our own apathy in regard to the causes of these straits, and, instead, prefer to blame everything and everybody, from taxation to human nature. We complain bitterly that the country is going to the dogs—but at the same time we denounce as " theorizing " any attempt to discuss remedial policies ; and we damn, as incitement to anarchy, any suggestion that our present policies have not been conspicuously successful.

A certain amount of to-day's tension between the classes is due to the feeling on the part of each—that the other is filching its job. The sudden rise of an able son of the people (educated, but hardly cultivated) either to influence or to affluence meets with resentment from the class which inherits, rather than

acquires, its cultivation, but has lost its inherited wealth. On the other hand, the hard-up of the educated class are causing resentment among the jobless of the lower strata, who complain that their already too scarce odd jobs are being stolen from them.

Our fairly general refusal to dwell upon these matters or to discuss them with an open mind, connives at these maladjustments. Some of our younger men—hard up but not too hard hit—are, from the best of cheery motives, unwittingly turning this tragedy of the New Poor into merely another cause of class resentment. To cite a specific instance, one of these adventurous youngsters, out of work and temporarily out of funds, got himself hired as night watchman in a Bermondsey soap factory. He thought it rather a lark: a good story for his friends, and only bewailed his fate when a tactless management transferred him to the office force. The subsequent imprisonment in a glass-partitioned cell, however, where he was sentenced to totting up cash entries, ate into his simple soul. Death, he decided, was preferable to such drabness. He hated the deafening clamour of his alarm clock and those shuddering awakenings in the

dark of a winter's morning. He loathed bolting his breakfast and dashing for the 7.45. The crowding on the Underground got on his nerves; he found the lifeless bearing of most of his fellow-passengers unutterably depressing. He detested the stale odour of dust and ink that pervaded the office; the musty ledgers; the incessant clatter of the typewriting machines. Even the blessed luncheon hour at the end of the morning seemed to him but an irritation of sordid service and sticky crumbs. Had he forgotten his hardships in the trenches? Certainly not—*but that was War!* Had he forgotten his work on the frontier? Certainly not—*but that was different!* Not to be named in the same breath as this hectic grind! Thanks—but he'd had enough of it!

We are not dramatizing the experiences of this formerly contented young man, nor exaggerating his indignant struggles when caught in the industrial machine. Although the social order which he represents learned, long ago, how to face the monotony and the fever of the frontier and the trenches, it has not yet acquired the drab endurance demanded by the time clock, the glass partition, and the twice-a-day Underground journey between Earl's Court and the

City. Death—a thousand times—rather than such a dreary round ! The job of night watchman—" where a chap could at least move about "—was infinitely better ! Thus the New Poor, hunting for " *anything* " in the way of work, increase the problem of the " old poor " already embittered by their accustomed struggle to make a living. At the present time of acute tension between the classes (a tension which it would seem wise not to increase unnecessarily) these job piracies are becoming too frequent. As another example we will cite the case of Tommy *versus* Higgins.

Higgins, formerly third gardener at Lord Taxedmore's place, and now doing odd gardening and handyman jobs, suddenly finds himself cut out by a cheerful and happy-go-lucky young gentleman—Godfrey Alexander Massanger Hawtrey, called " Tommy " for short—this having nothing to do with his lawful names. Not that Tommy meant to cut Higgins out, or even had the slightest idea that he was doing so. Nor was Higgins' work unsatisfactory. The thing came about merely through what Tommy, later, called a " happy accident," and what Higgins, on the other hand, designated as " bleedin' bad luck ! " But the loss

to Higgins was a tragedy ; while the gain to Tommy was merely a tide-over and a lark.

Tommy, having dropped in to tea at the Durham's house in Pont Street, happened to bewail, with quite convincing bitterness, his lack of gainful occupation, at the same time protesting, with emphasis and eloquence, his readiness to tackle *anything !* Whereupon Vevey Durham, perched on the fender-stool, and biting into a bun with the avidity permissible to a dean's daughter, engaged him on the spot for the twice-weekly manicuring of her little runabout, and the daily glance-over of the Durham window-boxes. " It would be nice to have him under her eyes," she said, and she also reminded him that he must, quite often, stay for luncheon.

" Who's doing the job now ? " Tommy had the decency to ask.

" The man who's supposed to clean the windows," Vevey had answered, truthfully enough, but unfortunately giving Tommy the impression that this window expert had probably only condescended, temporarily, to the care of the car and the geraniums. So that was that—and Higgins thus lost his job to Tommy—between two bites of a bun.

Tommy's wail for work was, to a certain extent, really sincere. For a year or more he had been " looking for something," by which he meant some occupation of absorbing interest which would also pay him well. In the meantime, in order to maintain an appearance of industry which would camouflage his delightful liberty (and also keep him in pocket-money until something more suitable turned up), he was quite willing to undertake various temporary employments, most of them highly spectacular, as in the present instance : a presumably well-educated young Englishman gallantly willing to hire himself out to oil a car and care for window-boxes. Quite entertaining—to Tommy. Frightfully amusing—to Tommy's friends. And even when Higgins (hired for an hour or so to clean the Durham drawing-room windows) attacked Tommy with some curious irrelevances about him (Higgins) having a wife and kids at home, Tommy did not in the least realize that he had, unwittingly, sneaked Higgins' job. Surely " home " was just the place where a man's wife and kids *ought* to be ! What the devil was the chap grousing about ?

Well—that's only one example. There may

be a funny side to this heedless and unconscious job pirating : humour being not merely the ability to see the funny side of the funny thing, but rather the ability to see the funny side of something that is not funny at all. And since our unemployment problem is not funny—to the unemployed—we would do well to temper our humour with some imagination and to think, doggedly toward a remedy.

We have only to stop and think over our own circle of hard-up friends to realize that these temporary job piracies are unfair. Almost without exception our youngsters think they are looking for some useful work, whereas what they are really hankering after is adventure. They insist that they don't care a hang what the work is—but unless it proves to be the kind they want, under the conditions they like, they have not the remotest idea of buckling down to it. Reasonable enough, perhaps, but that is not the slightest excuse for grabbing Higgins' job away from him, simply to fill in the time and furnish pocket-money. It is tactless, to say the least, to ignore the present strain between the classes, and stir up, quite unnecessarily, caste bitterness. It is Tommy's duty to inform himself better as to current

conditions in that labour world whose problems have, up to now, failed to interest him.

A certain economic sophistication has resulted from the lessons of the War. The Victorian theory that there are "*idle* rich" has gone (with many another fine old fallacy) into the discard : unless we define idleness as an intense activity in unimportant directions. We are beginning to recognize that an eternal preoccupation with the lesser things of life is worse than idle : it is mischievous. Too persistent an absorption in the state of the tennis-courts and the chances for the shoot will stand, to-morrow, for a dereliction of duty at least as great—and distinctly analogous to—the crime of the sentry found asleep at his post. Tommy and his kind can work hard and well, but the Labour world is becoming aware that, up to date, these game and gallant young gentlemen have been able to enjoy a wide choice amongst the work the world wants done. Tommy has, hitherto, chosen what was likely to suit him, and has done good work. Now that he is driven to it he is ready to tackle the less interesting jobs ; but he must be discouraged from taking up *anything*—just as a lark—because when Tommy's love of adventure

takes him into the field of casual labour, Higgins, discouraged and bitter, is likely to add himself to the resentful Reds.

But Tommy, unfortunately, is at present blind to all this. He rides well, shoots straight, and tells the truth. He plays a magnificent game of tennis. He dances delightfully. His education having been the conventional one at a good public school, he knows little of history and nothing whatever of economics. He is not imaginative ; consequently he is not in the least sensitive about anything which does not, directly or indirectly, affect himself. Selfish ? Why of course—what else could be expected ? Vain ? Oh, yes—but hasn't he proved his right to a little youthful vanity by laughing at his troubles, ignoring his debts, and showing himself eager to tackle *anything*—even window-boxes ? He has lived up to the standards Society has set for him, so it is hardly to be wondered at that he has never reflected how few, and how elementary, are the inhibitions demanded by these standards. Altogether, there is a certain gay impudence about Tommy's attitude to life, and we all (including Tommy himself !) love that impudence. But if he continues to let himself be overpraised

for this ready-for-anything spirit—without so much as a demur, or a confession that his fickle intentions in regard to uninteresting occupations make his cheery tackling of new experiences not as heroic as they appear—Tommy is some day going to be caught out!

We saw a good deal of this sort of thing during the Great Strike: that unfortunate hold-up which did so much to estrange sympathy from Labour. There are two popular half-truths about this Strike; neither of them compatible either with intelligence or with information. The one—held by the radical element among the workers, is that the educated classes united in an attempt to destroy them, and "swanked" about what probably was, to the amateurs, a brief and enjoyable adventure. Isolated instances which might support this view undoubtedly occurred, but it was by no means the general temper of the classes which united in disaster simply and solely *to get things done*. The half-truth from the other side is that the educated strike-breakers accomplished hitherto undreamed-of marvels, and bested the working-man at every point. To demur at this somewhat fulsome

praise (especially in the more conscientiously genteel suburbs) is to be instantly suspected of Bolshevistic tendencies. Fortunately, however, those of the educated classes who, in handling the Strike, did the most work and the best work, were the least willing to accept any especial praise for it. They were quite willing to admit that to offer one's services to the Nation (while one's world looks on and applauds) is duty in its most pleasant form; and the vaunting comparisons between their accomplishment and that of the routine workers did not come from the intelligent. Although many illusions were destroyed in regard to the intricate nature of much that had previously been classified as " skilled " labour, the amateur of common sense realized perfectly that many of the strikers even deprecated the Strike—but were forced into it by their class affiliations; and that his cheery, amateur efforts in this great emergency gave him not the slightest right either to patronize or to belittle the routine worker. The educated man, unless totally devoid of imagination, admitted his advantages of start. Well-fed; brought up in the open air—naturally he had a vim, an enthusiasm to bring to the adventure that the

average routine worker cannot give. (The *average* worker—not the man at the top of his trade nor the man fortuitously placed.) Those amateurs who did the best work resented, as indignantly as the working man, flunkey flattery for having " set an example " to the routine workers who become listless and bitter over the monotony and hardship of the daily job. The same conditions had not been met, even if the brief period of the Strike enlightened many amateurs as to just how long and how hard a year of monotonous days could be. Ignorance and apathy in regard to the Nation's problems are not by any means confined to the submerged tenth—and certain hardships and grievances of certain classes of the workers are assuredly among those problems. More information may lead to less tension.

The occasional ebullitions of vainglorious-ness, however, rightfully belong to the dark ages of Squire's daughters dispensing charity soup ; of humble and grateful crossing-sweepers, and of little porringers carried to the village churchyard by simple little maids of preposterous orthodoxy. Tommy, to do him justice, forbore from " swanking " about his activities during the Strike, but he still needs

a little enlightenment, as well as some training for his own place in the scheme of things.

Suggest this to him, however, and he will be plaintive in the extreme. Will insist that he cannot for the life of him see any especial virtue in sticking to some beastly office job like those johnnies who *have to* stick. Will say that if a chap doesn't have to—then to *choose* such a game would be imbecile—stark looney !

Some of to-day's thought, therefore, should be directed towards finding a place for Tommy and fitting him for that place. Our young people are capable of excellent things, even if their demonstrations frequently appear somewhat unsatisfactory. Tommy and Vevey—out for a job—can learn much. A little more information may go far toward bringing that peace on earth which is born of goodwill to men.

III

HIGGINS "GOES RED"

MEANWHILE, Higgins wants work. No one thinks of offering him charity, and unfortunately for him he does not belong to the class which receives casual invitations to stop for luncheon after finishing his work with the window-boxes! Higgins, having formerly been a gardener, and later a worker at odd jobs (anything he could pick up), is not eligible, much to his disgust, for relief pay under the Unemployment Insurance Act. When he made his remonstrance to Tommy ("sneakin' the job away from" him) that he had *a wife and kids at home*, he greatly understated his case. He might, with bitter truth, have added that this family of his was facing slow starvation.

In the old days, when under-gardener at Lord Taxedmore's place, Higgins had been a steady enough worker, of no outstanding merit excepting a dogged persistence. The vicar, it is true, was never able to make much headway

with this taciturn, rather stupid-looking mower of the Taxedmore lawns, who seemed contented enough with his lot : accepting his job as under-gardener to the " family " as unquestioningly as he voted for the Conservative side when election day came around. A decent, hard-working, honest creature was Higgins. It even took some time before he became embittered, and quite a long time before he " went red." The thing that might have saved him—enough unemployment relief to keep his family from going hungry—was denied him, because even the " dole " is subject to specific regulations, and Higgins' particular trade happened to be among those excluded from unemployment relief.

The only thing that can be said for this method of unemployment insurance is that it is incontrovertibly the lesser of the two evils : anarchy on the one hand, State relief on the other. But although the measure has minimized the danger of the " red menace " from the mob *below*, it has caused, to a regrettable degree, resentment in the mob *above*. Nor does it remove the hardships of the casual labourer : the man of infrequent and poorly paid work. Economists are agreed that the

tree of industry, if it is to be cured of economic blight, must be sprayed from all sides. Until it *is* thus sprayed they insist that we shall have to put up with such " relief " measures : measures which, from their very emergency nature, are likely to be far from sound in principle if adopted for permanence.

Among the most interesting inconsistencies of human nature is that tendency to frown on the prejudice of the individual, yet to take pride in the prejudice of the group. We do not allow ourselves even to use such a phrase as " group prejudice " : " class loyalty " sounds much better ; although the very phrase suggests that such " loyalty " may often imply a defence of a petty advantage to our own class, against the vital need of another. Further, we make this class loyalty an excuse for our indifference and inertia as individuals. We don't care because we don't know, and so determined are we that group prejudice (class loyalty) shall govern our opinions, that we seldom care to know.

Another reason (if not excuse) for our apathy is that comfortable circumstances lead to inevitable ignorances. A financial competence, a sound business, an assured position, a steady

job, all remove the individual citizen from the need of wrestling with many uncomfortable truths. Information is sometimes hard to get ; prejudices are always hard to lose ; hasty judgment has become with us a habit, and censure is all too easy. Most of us would like to see an end to all this unemployment, but just at present, thanks, we would rather not be harrowed with the details. Excepting to those who are alive to the danger of greater evils, State relief in any form is anathema.

The prevalent impression about the dole is that it is wholly the work of Satan. Satan in Russian boots. Although admittedly unscientific as a permanency in its present form (as palliative plasters to economic diseases are almost certain to prove), even this remedial expedient is less likely to undermine the morale of the worker than are the evils which lurk at the heels of unemployment and starvation. When presented, therefore, as a remedial alternative adopted during an economic deadlock to safeguard the country from possible anarchy, the dole appears (like the kilted Scot at Olympia) to be in fancy dress !

The idea behind this measure is to reduce the number of C_3 citizens born into the next

generation. The simple, official docket " C_3 " means below par generally, because under-nourished, and therefore under-equipped for life. At the time of adoption this unemployment insurance covered only certain trades subject to sudden stoppages and consequent unemployment crises: building, engineering, construction of works, iron-founding, ship-building, saw-milling and construction of vehicles. During the Great War, in 1916, the National Insurance Act (Part II., Munition Workers) was passed, and a million more unemployed became eligible for relief. This was followed by the Unemployment Insurance Act passed in 1920, and so acute was the unemployment problem caused by the sudden demobilization of the troops that a special out-of-work relief payment on a non-contributory basis (" Uncovenanted Benefit ") was arranged to care for special cases—ex-service men and war workers.

Abuses ? Plenty ! But investigation brings to light the amazing fact that the intelligent among the labour leaders are doggedly wrestling with these abuses—doing away with them ; making their repetition impossible. Further, reflection supports the contention of these leaders

—that the loss sustained by reason of such leaks is probably as nothing compared to the horrors England might have to face from a mob of unemployed, uninsured, desperate men and women.

In our denunciations, however, we do not always remember that the dole is not a free pension to be had for the asking (the current hallucination in regard to it in the United States), but is a definite system of insurance with definite conditions attached. A tramp, for instance, cannot leave the road and draw the dole. He would not have the necessary qualifications. In all cases an initial registration is necessary, and in the majority of cases this initial registration must be followed by the payment of " dues." These dues are paid by the worker, the employer, and the State, and conform to a rigid schedule which demands that for " Standard benefit " there must have been six contributions for each week's benefit paid, with a maximum benefit of twenty-six weeks in one year. At least twenty contributions must have been paid since the beginning of the insurance year preceding the benefit year. Where abnormal conditions have to be met an " extended benefit " provision may be

granted or refused at the discretion of the Labour Minister, provided that application has been made through the proper channels. But all out-of-works are not eligible ; workers in certain occupations (domestic servants, for instance, outworkers among them) are excluded from such insurance, it being assumed that there is plenty of such work to be had.

Naturally, abuses have crept in. Pull has frequently been used ; " politics " have often been played. Irresponsibility and laziness are not the prerogatives of any one class : labour, like all other classes, will always be able to furnish its full quota of cheats and loafers. But the point to remember is that, industrial conditions being what they were, the dole has prevented starvation and anarchy, even if it has, in certain cases, appeared to put a premium upon laziness in all those cases where a family could, by pooling its unemployment payments, live without working. Such cases, however, are not nearly as frequent as the prejudiced would like to believe. Unfortunate as some of the effects of this policy may have been, and irritating as some of its results undoubtedly are, we would do well if we oftener reminded ourselves that this dole, far from being a senti-

mental and indiscriminate pensioning making for national financial suicide, has been a national insurance against anarchy—a fact never mentioned by its denouncers, and too seldom emphasized by its supporters. As a permanent policy, however, the principle is admittedly unscientific, and one of the duties facing the intelligent half of the community is to strike at the roots of the industrial maladies which *need* such a dangerous remedy.

At present, however, indignation prevails regarding this *enfant terrible* of the Labour Party. No abuse is too violent. The evils which it has probably averted are ignored ; the inconveniences and abuses to which it has given rise are unceasingly anathematized, and any remedial virtues which it may have are entirely lost sight of in the storm of denunciation. No serious thinker disputes that it would have been cheaper in the long run had it been possible to provide temporary employment for everybody willing and able to work. The most valid objection to the dole is the difficulty of judging whether or not a man is really trying his best to get a job, or whether he is choosing, like many of his betters, to live on an income no matter how small, how temporary, or how

obtained—whether by revenue from slum property or by insurance payments under the Unemployment Insurance Act. The thing for us to bear in mind is that we can hardly expect the working man to make any more unnecessary financial sacrifices than are voluntarily made by the presumably educated and assumedly enlightened classes, and to reflect, instead, on our own attitude toward certain taxation of our incomes. Here, if anywhere, is our opportunity to set an example—and here, more than anywhere, we fall short !

Yet even with all the safeguards possible as to its use, this relief payment must be kept in the place intended for it—as insurance *against* unemployment—not as a pension in place of the employment itself. This measure was never intended to be the nation's sole gesture toward solving the problem of the unemployed. Every man has a right to work if he will ; and until there can be devised some more efficient policy in regard to industry, temporary pensions or temporary jobs will have to be provided for as many out-of-works as possible, in order to prevent starvation and racial deterioration. The Prevention of Unemployment Bill aimed at relieving the " dole " of a

large part of its human burden by providing such temporary work, work of a nature that would be of permanent value to the country. The development and the better use of land ; the prevention of coast erosion ; the reclamation and drainage of land ; road and water power development ; afforestation, improvement of ports, etc., could all furnish work for the jobless—and will do so once we make up our minds that the dole may be more expensive than the providing of the job. We cannot, as a nation, afford to let the unemployed become the unemployable. Few problems are unsolvable if we can but achieve the will to solve them.

Our responsibility as individuals, therefore, is to see that constructive suggestions—no matter from what political party they come—are not stultified nor waived aside by prejudice. It is unfortunate when arguments (excellent enough as general principles for normal times, but scarcely applicable in a crisis brought about by a deadlock of interests) prevail over suggestions which may, to-day, perhaps seem startling, but which will probably be considered conservative enough on some not too distant to-morrow. No matter how strongly we may

feel against the general principle of supplying, by artificial means, " relief " jobs, we would do well to remember that a hungry man is likely to be an angry man—that circumstances alter even political cases—and that Higgins, if left to starve, will " go red."

The objection often made to such relief work—that the tax-payer, in order to meet the taxation necessary for the financing of such schemes, is himself obliged to create unemployment to the exact extent that such taxation forces him to reduce his own expenditure—is convincing only to the unreflecting. Such taxation admittedly causes less employment in those trades which supply luxuries, since luxuries, of necessity, are usually the first expenses to be cut down. At the same time, the added stimulus given to the vital occupations connected with the food supply, housing, clothing, etc. (by otherwise unemployed men being employed, and therefore in a position to buy), is likely to give profitable work to more individuals than have been forced into other trades by the deflecting of the same money from luxuries.

Economists are agreed that the great need, both for to-day and for to-morrow, is that

work shall be made less irregular, and that increased productivity may be achieved by better organization, by the raising of the efficiency of the worker himself, and by making the most of natural resources. Where work is seasonal, a training in a second trade will eventually be encouraged in order to tide over the dull periods of intermittent employment. Casual labour may even come to be organized as such on commercial lines, so that for dock labourers, Higgins, and similar workers, the degrading influences of intermittent and infrequent jobs may be lessened.

" *For the sake of the new generation we'll help these victims of trade depression, weather conditions, over-population—until they can find work !* " (THAT was the idea behind the dole, when it was first adopted.) " *Our brave boys from the trenches—we'll help them out until they can find work !* " (THAT was the idea behind the extension of its application, in 1920.) Some of those " brave boys " have not even yet found steady work (a lot of that their own fault, possibly), but how can an educated class whose after-war reaction for its spare time has been to go dance-mad and jazz-crazy, merely anathematize a lower class for claiming

a right to its own restless reactions? The egotism of such criticism may be understandable enough, but it is hard to respect the indignation! Our objections to the " dole " system may be well thought out and justifiable, but until we have something to suggest which will not only meet the acute distress of to-day but which will be constructive as regards to-morrow—we shall do well to avoid hatred-breeding denunciations.

Under our constitutional form of government we British have what is probably the most conspicuously free democracy in the world. But as a nation's needs develop, an increasing amount of its legislation must be aimed at *the good of the whole*, and this may be expected in exact proportion to the extent that the national conscience has been awakened. It is unfortunate, therefore, that any misinformation regarding our unemployment problems should come from our clubs and our counties as well as from our leather-lunged orators at Hyde Park. The misinformation from the clubs and the counties does infinitely the greater harm, because to the uninformed of the middle class it carries a certain measure of authority, as coming from educated people who ought to

know what they are talking about—although half the time they don't. If the educated classes can be guilty of such addled chatter what right has anyone to blame the extremists of the Left Wing for their soap-box frenzies ? We should constantly remind ourselves that light travels rapidly only before, and until, it reaches the human skull !

A quotation from the Minority Poor Law Report of the Poor Law Commission provides food for those sufficiently imaginative to digest it :—

> " Fifty years hence we shall be looking back with amazement at the helpless and ignorant acquiescence of the governing classes . . . in the constant debasement of character and physique, not to mention the perpetual draining away of the nation's wealth that idleness combined with starvation plainly causes."

It is not a change in human nature, but a change in point of view that is needed if these preventable evils are to be remedied. To organize society so that the employable individual shall be able to find work ought surely to be the paramount concern with the leaders of any political party which has social order as its aim. Preventable poverty (and extreme poverty *is* preventable) is not an incurable disease, but is, rather, a symptom of a social

maladjustment which can be cured if we are single-minded in our determination to discover such a cure. In view, however, of the widespread misinformation as to the issues, apathy, if not hostility, is usually encountered by those who aim to be constructive rather than merely critical. Heresy hunting has not by any means lost its glamour as a popular pastime, and perhaps the most hated heretic of to-day is he who, desiring to discover a cure for the present social maladjustments, considers the problem in terms of life itself, and refuses to confine his attention merely to the economic aspects—the patient's bank account and the amount of profit which may be wrung from industry—whether as wages, salaries, dividends or royalties. We need to remind ourselves that although sound economics should form the basis of any constructive thinking, such economics must by no means be the sole ambition of any civilized order. We should hold the life as more than meat—and the body as more than raiment.

It is in ultimate ideal, therefore, as well as in theory of government, that the thinkers of the modern school take issue with the believers in the purely materialistic policy of unbridled

competition. If the end of life is to best all other nations in material progress, any State which deflected ambition toward other aims might look on in unenvious serenity—but it neither could nor would compete for such material supremacy. If, on the other hand, the important thing is a full and creative life, then those modernists who would test all things (even theories !) and hold fast to those which might prove a cure for some of our present industrial ills, have decidedly the best of the argument. Were such a change of ideals to come about there need be no fear of intellectual stagnation. The creative faculty is, however, terribly handicapped by our present standards : for these deflect energy toward the acquirement of wealth and power *as proofs of efficiency*. Such aims distort a man's view and prevent him from bringing disinterested judgment to bear on any social or economic matters over which he may occasionally find time to reflect.

A sound basis, however, economic or otherwise, not yet having been laid to any social structure likely to appeal to any enlightened future generation, economists must continue to remain obsessed by the financial aspect of

the questions between capital and labour—very much as the communities of bygone times concerned themselves with the problems belonging to the days of religious warfare. Since too many (or too few) worldly possessions necessarily preoccupy the attention and deflect ambition toward sordid things, the community which aims at progress might do well to work toward an economic structure which would free such (potential) creative thought—not from worldly occupation, but from worldly *pre*-occupation. In an intelligently ordered society only a limited amount of each day need be devoted to the basic needs of life : the rest of the time would be left free for life itself, and for such work as might be of a man's own choosing. The majority of us, however, regard such questions academically, as of political, rather than of vital, human interest. If we are ever to progress beyond such delusions it must be by a determined effort—*on the part of men of liberal education*—toward more constructive thought.

That constructive thought should be encouraged in its efforts to work out a solution of our present grave problems, ought to go without saying. For such efforts toward necessary

modifications of the old, or necessary adaptations of the new ideas, we should cherish, rather than harry, our visionaries: since if progress is ever to be achieved it will have to be by the single-minded efforts of an aristocracy of vision which will value, above any material privilege, the privilege of serving its country.

Our great problem of to-day is unemployment. Unless racial deterioration is to result, a better way must be found of meeting this problem than by harnessing the racehorse to the coster's cart; or by permitting Higgins-the-unemployed to become Higgins-the-unemployable. Constructive thinking and constructive efforts were never more direly needed. If such constructive thinking toward constructive effort can be had from the members of our present aristocracy of birth, so much the better. England has bred a fine thing—the English gentleman. His qualities need not—unless he himself decrees it—be wasted.

IV

THE MINER'S JOB

To glance at such complicated questions as that of *coal* through the haze of prejudice—whether of upper, middle or lower class—is to run a grave risk of allowing the interests of the Nation to fall into the hands of that unbalanced element least capable of any far-seeing economic outlook. To avert such a danger it might even be considered the paramount duty of any of us making the slightest pretensions to social conscience or to religious principles, to inform ourselves, as far as our education and opportunities permit, as to the issues involved. Not until we are thus informed are we equipped to deal intelligently with the remedies suggested for our present grave maladjustments. Until we do thus inform ourselves, our championships and our disapprovals alike tend merely to useless strife.

But the majority of us will not listen to—much less discuss—any attempt to bring order out of our industrial chaos. Few of us are

sufficiently informed to be able to discriminate as to what *is* constructive thinking, and what is idle day-dreaming. Instinctively, therefore, we oppose any attempt to discuss such matters. If discussion is forced upon us we immediately become irritable, and querulously defend things as they are. We sputter, rather than argue. Blissfully unaware of our inconsistency, we accuse our opponents of being "half-baked theorists," forgetting that our present industrial muddle is directly due to basing an industrial system on the half-baked theory that man, left to his own devices, will always deal equitably with his brother man !

The coal question is of paramount importance : coal being the key industry on which depend the iron, steel, shipbuilding, engineering, transport and innumerable other activities. The difficulty in the coal situation is the usual one in matters of economic dispute : that both sides can give excellent reasons, even if but one side will, in the end, be proved to have had justification. Few of us, however, trouble to investigate : it is easier to choose sides once and for all, and thenceforth shout abuse. The shut mind and the open mouth usually go together. Comfortably philosophical in regard

to evils which affect us only indirectly, we forget that, by pinning our loyalties to the past —ignoring present evils and denying future hope—we thereby aid and abet the " reds."

The coal question is, further, of infinite complexity. The basic fact about coal is that it is mined to be *sold*. Our British coal-owners find that because of the present mining costs (which include the various levies for royalties, etc.) France, Germany, Russia, Poland, Belgium and the United States are under-selling them. In England a longer working day is at present prohibited, and an employer who permits a miner to exceed the legal limit is courting trouble. The American miner, *per capita*, produces approximately four times as much coal as the British miner, aided and abetted as the American miner is (often against his Unionized will) by the electric drill, the duck-bill conveyer which picks up the scattered coal, and the new loading machines, to say nothing of immense geological advantages. Furthermore, in order to meet the needs of their increasing industrialization, other countries, hitherto good customers of ours, are learning to develop their own coal, oil, and water power. In the face of foreign competition,

therefore, *if our present methods are the only methods practicable*, the mine owners are justified in their claim that England cannot hope to win back open markets on the present schedule of hours and wages ; and that many of those mines handicapped by local conditions which increase the cost of bringing the coal to the surface must be closed down, unless wages are reduced, the working day lengthened, or an increase of productivity (that happy thought !) comes to the rescue. All, from the owner's point of view, true enough.

The average man of a conservative turn of mind is content with this apparently logical reasoning. He does not trouble to inform himself further : he accepts the matter as it is presented by his favourite newspaper, and lets it go at that. It does not occur to him to reflect that such arguments as the above are only reasonable if the premise is sound : that there is no other way to get coal for the country except by subjecting a certain proportion of the miners to wages which mean misery.

Now although most of us admit that the miners may, here and there, have a " case "—we seldom realize that a little more information on our part might enlist our sympathies to a

very decided extent. The miners' grievance is based on the intolerable degradation of the standard of living threatened in certain districts, endured in others, and, under our present system, unavoidable because of local conditions. Those who suffer from these local conditions contend that, since the cost of living has increased out of all proportion to their wages, they should not be asked to consent to any further wretchedness. The fact that in some districts conditions are fair enough does not minimize the hardships endured in others. The miners, aware that many levies (less justifiable than their own need for a living wage) are being made on their output, see no reason why they, rather than the owners, should be " unselfish " for the sake of the public.

Everyone but the most hopeless junker-reactionary agrees that the men have a case. No one wanted the coal strike : everyone claimed to want a fair return to the mine-owner and a living wage to the men. If there could have been a mobilization of brains and a *concentration of public attention*, the matter could have been solved long ago by practical compromise. But we permitted it to become a class duel—the Haves *versus* the Have-nots,

and the Strike was accordingly allowed to do its worst—cripple the business of the country, increase the ranks of the unemployed, foment radical discontent into red revolt, and threaten even the best-intentioned owners with bankruptcy.

Now the coal question, being neither social nor political, but economic, can be left neither to the judgment of those traditional Tories, who would "starve the lazy dogs back to work," nor to the extremists of the Left Wing, with their clamour for confiscation. It is absurd, however, to assume that any remedial alternative to the present deadlock must, *ipso facto*, spring from the brain of some half-baked theorist. The best brains of the country have been engaged in the recent investigations and reports, and it is time more of us familiarized ourselves with the information available, dropped some of our prejudices, and gave our deliberate consideration to the various alternatives suggested.

The chief principle of the modern school is that organized justice—not haphazard philanthropy—must be applied to our economic ills. These modernists insist that the main object of change is to secure *efficiency in service*, and that

such efficiency can only be secured by offering the workers and the executives, as well as the owners and shareholders, a reasonable stimulus to effort. They claim that this can only be done by removing from industry the paralysing grasp of those whose sole interest is the amount of profit which can be wrung from it—without even having the excuse that there will subsequently be a reasonably fair distribution of such profits.

The majority of us object, instinctively, to any suggestion of State control of industry. We assume that such control would entail a distant and clumsy bureaucracy. If we would but take the trouble to inform ourselves on the matter, even this bogey might be laid at rest. Because of majority prejudice, however, most able economists agree that at the present stage of economic unenlightenment it would do no good whatever to exchange the profit-taker (whether aristocrat or commoner) for what the average man would oppose as bound to be an indifferent officialdom. Too much ignorance and prejudice would clog the wheels. Bad as many of our present methods are, the evils which they involve must be deliberated upon with all seriousness by the majority of educated

people, and must be remedied without the ill-considered impetuosity which would dislocate all trade. No remedy, however, will prove successful *unless public opinion is prepared to accept and to further it*. Public opinion must therefore be *led*—and *our* responsibility is in direct ratio to our privileges.

" Nationalization," however, is not the only alternative to our present deadlock, and even this oft-used term is not always fully understood by many who most strenuously oppose it. Briefly, it is ownership by the nation, with a consequent pooling of the resources of the industry concerned, under the administration of a directorship composed of trained and experienced men representing the nation, and responsible to the public for the success of the business which they administer. That the success of any industry thus State-owned must depend largely on the training, experience and responsibility of its local administrators, goes without saying—otherwise " nationalization " would mean merely an inefficient bureaucracy, widely unpopular among the executives, and regarded with suspicion and hostility by the men. The success of any such scheme would depend entirely on the efficiency of its constitu-

tion—whether unitary or federal, and on the responsibility of its administration—whether centralized or decentralized. No intelligent economist contends that an indiscriminate nationalization of all industries would prove a cure-all, any more than he suggests such confiscation without any recompense. The majority of us, however, oppose without knowledge, in spite of the fact that a very slight effort to inform ourselves might teach us much in regard to methods by which the present deadlock between owner, investor and labourer in certain natural monopolies might be prevented, and the interests of the public safeguarded.

But most of us are over-busy, and many of us are over-tired by the daily grind. We cannot, we feel, dabble in economics. At the same time we never hesitate to dabble—and more than dabble—in opposition. We vociferously defend conditions as to which we are blissfully ignorant. We are so obsessed and blinded by our early prejudices that we are instinctively antagonistic to the idea that commonsense might be applied to our industrial ills. We obstruct with the prejudice that is born of half knowledge—and even that half knowledge is

seldom as germane to the question at issue as we would like to believe. We fight without knowing very much either about the issues involved, or the conditions which we are defending. The man who has investigated and *still* disagrees—has a right to say so. But the majority of us disagree on general principles—without a shadow of an attempt to inform ourselves regarding our opponents' viewpoint. Even when our sense of fairplay forbids us to indulge in open antagonisms, we are apt to forget that our lazy demurs to *any* suggestion toward betterment postpones *all* betterment, and fosters unnecessary and dangerous bitterness.

On the infrequent occasions when we make the attempt to increase our information, we are surprised to discover that the modern school offers no cure-all. The modern school, we find, cheerfully admits that for certain industries nationalization would be inexpedient because of complications of administration. We are astonished to learn that this—to the majority of us, nauseous—remedy is only prescribed for those industries which are hampered in their working and development by proprietary rights which either carry no responsibilities, or for which the responsibilities have seldom,

according to experience, been assumed. We are surprised to find that these modernists are not advocating State ownership of land, but merely taxation based on its rental value. And we even resent such comparative reasonableness ; we prefer to hate the enemy, and we like to think that we know where we are. We prove, time and time again, that misinformation is the mother of prejudice.

The coal-mining industry, in which, owing to varying natural conditions—depth of seam, water, etc.—certain mines can pay excellent profits while others may even be run at a loss, is an example of an industry in which pooling of resources might be expected to improve present conditions for the worker, for the executive, and for the consumer. On the other hand, the element of personal risk enters so largely into the miner's job that in order to increase productivity a larger than usual share of profits from that industry ought surely to belong to the man who takes such risks—just as capital is entitled to interest in proportion to *its* risk. In such occupations as involve grave danger, therefore, investigation is likely to lead us to the conclusion that, since increase of productivity is our aim, the best method would be

that which, under an autonomous management, would share the profits, the losses and the responsibilities of that management. And since the health, wealth and happiness of so many millions depend on our adoption or adaptation of these remedial policies, such suggestions should have our best attention—else the mob, hastily and unwisely, may take matters into its own hands. Our competitors across the ocean have (much against their will) had an amazing advantage given them: that of a practically non-drinking working class. It is, therefore, certainly not to England's advantage to perpetuate the blockhead content to starve and brawl by turns, according to whether in work or out of it. But if a man is sufficiently intelligent to be a desirable citizen, he will be too intelligent to accept working conditions which not only mean misery, but are, in addition, quite unnecessary.

In the course of our investigations we shall discover that the modernist, contrary to all our theories, has no expectation of " living happily ever after " one or more of his suggestions have been put into practice. We shall even find that he has a nightmare of his own: that divided profits must, in equity, mean divided

losses as well. But in order to prevent such losses from working undue hardship and causing deterioration in the lower-paid workers, these modernists maintain that a system of graded insurance could be arranged, since the pooling of an industry's resources would make such insurance practicable.

Most of us, however, sweep aside such suggestions without even a hearing—much less any fair consideration. Few of us realize the growing resentments surrounding us, and from mistaken and short-sighted " class loyalty " we discourage—as likely to encourage anarchy—all constructive effort to prevent it.

After " making up " our minds, it has been our habit to shut them. With catch phrases and cheap cynicisms we dismiss any serious attempt to strike at the root of poverty, mistakenly holding that all such efforts aim, instead, at the root of property. Property need not be done away with—*must not* be done away with—but it has proved, quite conclusively, that it must be forced to carry its responsibilities. It is entitled to a return on its investment *in proportion to its risks*, but what that risk *is* must be decided in committee. On this matter of fair division of profits depend our

prospects for " increased productivity," and on our ability to increase productivity—mental as well as manual—depends the future of the British Empire.

In bygone times, education being confined to the few, an aristocracy was necessary to maintain the arts and the amenities. Later, when war made and unmade nations, an aristocracy fulfilled its duty to the Flag. Still later, when an expanding foreign policy required that those already trained from the cradle to authority should maintain justice among native populations, our aristocracy sent out its younger sons, and they gave a good account of themselves. But to-day, when the arts and the amenities are no longer the exclusive interest of a privileged minority ; when the glories of war no longer obsess men's minds, and when the white man's burden has a commercial side that makes advisable some information regarding economics, we are in dire need of an aristocracy which will give its attention to the new job—*trouble at home !*

V

OUR TOO-FREE PRESS

Now our seeker after truth will do well to remember that his daily newspaper is by no means always free to espouse any cause inimical to the political party favoured by its owners or the patrons of its advertising columns, but is only too free in its liberty to emphasize that aspect of the daily news which will best fit the " policy " of the paper.

We ourselves are to blame for the use our Press makes of this liberty. The public taste in truth is definite : penny plain, twopence coloured. As to the colour scream—the brighter the better. Yet there seldom is any deliberate falsification : this colour-scream is the result of our own demand that our newspapers shall be party organs—*our* party organs —rather than *news*-papers. Not until we become fully awake to the importance of such a thing shall we achieve a State-endowed, independent newspaper, *equipped* to give, and *required to give*—both sides.

That our Press shall be " free " is of the highest importance. Of all the notable achievements of our ancestors none is more significant than this complete liberty to print and comment on the news. That human fallibility should have its fling in our daily columns greatly adds to our gaiety as individuals, even if it detracts from the likelihood of peace between classes or understanding between nations. And our Press is only " too " free when we ourselves are too credulous.

As things are, although most of us realize perfectly that there may be another angle to that tidy little bunch of prejudices suggested by our daily newspaper, few of us allow this possibility to unsettle us. We read and we accept ; some of us even believe. No idea is less popular with the soap-box orator and the arm-chair politician than the suggestion that there must be two sides to every question.

Two sides to every question ? Two *hundred* to begin with, and the potentiality of a new crop each year. Altogether too tiring a thought when one remembers that truth (that flighty jade) skips here and there eternally making friends with the enemy. Deciding, therefore, that even two sides is one side too many for us

to digest, we allow the views championed by our pet newspaper to satisfy us. We prefer to ignore the fact that these newspaper articles are usually written in a hurry—by men who must often even *think* in a hurry—on lines already laid down for them !

" MINERS DEMAND HIGHER WAGES "

The *Daily Diehard* takes a grave view of the situation. " *Unless England with a firm hand crushes this red menace*——" etc.

The *Morning Shriek* gives the same news, but conveys a vastly different impression :—

" MINERS WANT LIVING WAGE ! "

" *Goaded to desperation by the recent rascality of the owners*——" etc. We all know the *Shriek.*

Simple enough. Such newspapers are committed to a " policy " whereby the news must be presented thus and so. Items of news which might give comfort to the enemy are usually relegated to obscure positions—or even left out. Were it not for the blue pencil such newspapers would find their columns overrun with unsettling accounts of inconvenient happenings starkly incompatible with that particular

aspect of truth championed by the owners, paid for by the advertisers, and subscribed for by the readers of that newspaper. "*Navvy Stones Bishop.*" (The Old Guard Press can well believe it; the public must again be warned of the "red menace"—and warned, moreover, on the front page—preferred position.) "*Taxi-driver Bilked by Major.*" (The stern *Daily Diehard* has no available space for such mischievous gossip.) "*Peer's Son Inherits Property.*" (The Labour paper expatiates on the fact with undisguised hostility, contrasting this inheritance with the lot of another—wholly fictitious but allegedly more deserving—baby born in the slums of Southwark.) "*Peer Leaves Fortune to Orphanage.*" (The Labour paper sees nothing so very meritorious in that, consequently the item is crowded out in favour of the latest scandal following the lockout in the building trades.) And so it goes.

Now by this means the news of the day is utterly transformed—is disseminated as propaganda for class and party, rather than administered as our daily dose of truth. We have even learned to *prefer* this precious game of gammon—yet at the same time we allow ourselves to be fooled by it. It is so much more

amusing to believe that black is white and white is black and never the twain do meet! There is something supremely satisfying about news which confirms our prejudices. News which unsettles us does not, we feel, "get us anywhere." *Anything* rather than that! We would sooner—much sooner—trot contentedly along in quite the wrong direction.

If this colouring of the news by means of individual newspaper policy would confine itself to a game and gallant backing of one side or the other (in matters of opinion, or interpretation of the same facts) no harm would be done. The stern joy that warriors feel for foemen worthy of their steel adds pep to life. But the class and party hatred fostered by extremist newspapers (for foemen whose grievances would be recognized as entirely just were they presented more fairly) is quite another thing. Much as we like to be entertained over our morning toast we, as the (presumably) educated classes, should in decency keep in mind that there are likely to be two hundred other aspects to the matter of which we have just read. Unless we remember that there *are* these other sides—and in order to find out about them occasionally digest an *enemy* edi-

torial—we are absorbing a daily dose of mental poison certain to atrophy kindly sympathies, to foster class hatred, and to befuddle our judgment as a nation on many vital questions.

We do not encourage a man to buy poison with a view to taking it himself—even if his so doing will affect no one *but* himself, and the chances are that the incident will soon be over. On the other hand, we *do* encourage him to buy, in as large quantities as he will, all the mental poison he wants—and then we beseech him to go out and vote on it! Let us hope that the angels enjoy laughing at our inconsistencies; too often we cause them to weep.

But we cannot evade blame merely by an unsportsmanlike attempt to shift our responsibility to the newspapers. *They* print what the public will pay for; and only unlimited capital, directed from Olympus, producing a newspaper to be read by supermen, could do differently. Short of some celestially conceived "pure news law" which would make it a felony to tint rosy, or black, or depressingly blue, the stark human fact—we (as the presumably educated classes) must try to control our own brains rather better. We realize (thanks to the

pure food labels) that the redness of some tomato sauces may be due to cochineal, and the greenness of some canned peas to bicarbonate of soda. Cannot we also bear in mind that the redness of those striking workmen (as reported in the *Daily Diehard*) may be an arbitrary assumption on the part of that estimable paper ? While we have not the slightest wish to hamper our glorious free Press in its laudable effort to get us to read (and subscribe for) the news, we might at least dilute our daily dose of prejudice with a little commonsense. Why do we ever permit ourselves to forget that an editorial on the Irish Nationalists, written by a Tory diehard and influenced by anti-Catholic policy is not likely to be the last word in impartiality ? Because we have not the slightest wish to curb either our enthusiasms or our animosities : the truth would be too drab.

Even although we may recognize that there is possibly something to be said in the matter beyond what has been published in our pet paper, we seldom have either the time or the inclination to hear it, and almost invariably do we avoid *reading* anything which might have a tendency to unsettle us. The public is not composed of the Just Man (pipedream—Plato),

or the broad-minded, clear-visioned female (pipedream—H. G. Wells), but of the Average Citizen—*that nightmare of the economist !* Yet even this average citizen has a certain excuse when we remember that all the time he has is the time left over from his daily scramble for a living, and all he has to work with is the brain which, a short nine hundred generations ago, he shared with his ape-like ancestors. Had he inherited more of those ancestors' wisdom and less of their other characteristics he would be more difficult to lead on those political issues for which we do not always desire an impartial presentation !

It is hardly to be wondered at, therefore, that so many of us allow ourselves to be fooled even with our eyes wide open. Our acceptances are cynical enough, yet our prejudices continue intensely partisan. With a docility that is unexplainable we adopt the opinions of our chosen newspapers, even although we realize that the game of one-sided presentation of the news is played too often with amazing irresponsibility. We hail as " strong " those editorials which most cynically disregard any possibility of there being another side to the matter treated, and we even resent hearing any-

thing which might raise a doubt as to the infallibility of our informant.

Labour papers altogether too often misrepresent everything outside Labour as parasitical, or piratical, or both. Written, as some of them are, by the half-educated, for the delectation (certainly not for the enlightenment) of the wholly *un*educated—their bias is understandable, even if not excusable. But with an even more reprehensible bigotry many newspapers of the Old Guard (presumably written by well-educated men for well-educated readers) are equally one-sided. These newspapers of the diehards may be depended upon to damn as anarchy, or as leading to anarchy, the same ambitions toward financial security (if held by the workers) that they most warmly applaud when held by the educated classes. Such extremists are unanimously and consistently opposed to any legislation of which the aim is avowedly the protection of the workers' standard of living, but are unanimously and consistently silent in regard to the conditions which make such legislation necessary.

It would be absurd even to suggest that a remedy might be found in the conscientious

daily reading of newspapers of opposing politics. The public won't—because the public can't: firstly because it has not time, and secondly because it is inhibited by the herd instinct. A dock-labourer painfully wrestling with the editorial columns of the *Daily Diehard* would have but short shrift from his comrades! Similarly, a conspicuous concentration on the *Morning Shriek* and similar papers would, in the best Conservative clubs, be enough to jeopardize any member's reputation for sanity.

Probably nowhere in the world exists an *equally educated* individual as ignorant of economic conditions as our average genial gentleman of the counties. Honest and brave, but with a lack of imagination which makes him too easily content with these (after all rather elementary) virtues. Yet he is hardly to blame for this lack of vision, since the accident of birth has, for him, virtually meant the wearing of blinkers from babyhood. The man of ability (born in the counties or anywhere else) can overcome the handicaps of a one-sided social education, but the average hunting, fishing, shooting, take-the-dogs-for-a-run Englishman accepts life *as he finds it for himself*—and he usually finds it very good. Even when

impoverished by heavy land taxation and forced to face the disappointments and economies that have long been the lot of other men, he is likely to become embittered, rather than enlightened, since his one chance of having his sympathies broadened *by learning straight facts from his newspaper*, is denied him by the policy bias of that party organ.

Lord Taxedmore returns from a desolate stroll through his neglected gardens. Everything is going to ruin because, instead of there being a corps of gardeners to keep things up, the entire staff now consists of one and a half men—the "half" being represented by a sixteen-year-old lout who, in times gone by, would have qualified as village idiot. So Lord Taxedmore is depressed and irritated. His luck is down and his blood is up, and as he enters the house and stalks into his chilly library the fretful flicker of a wholly inadequate fire heats nothing but his temper.

In this frame of mind he picks up his daily newspaper (*The Diehard*). He reads of "Increase of Land Tax"—which he will have to pay. "Trouble in the East" means that certain dividends are likely to be suspended. "Miners Demand Higher Wages"—and his

income will suffer if they get their way. All are items of news terribly depressing to him, and the editorials thereon only tend to increase his gloom.

But does he come across one word hinting that there may be an economic exigency behind, and certain justification for, the heavy taxation which has resulted in laying waste his rose garden? He vaguely realizes that the trouble in the East is likely to be due to native fanaticism in favour of some religious prejudice pronounced anti-social by the white man. But does he come across one word to make him realize that there may be fanaticism and prejudice under his own roof—under his *own hat?* Does he read one word which might lead him to see that his own personal limitations are as anti-social as the religious prejudices of the heathen, and are, moreover, causing just as much trouble—*and trouble at home?* Does he read one word suggesting that any of the "discontented" working class ("damned selfish hogs!") may have a few justifiable grievances perfectly remediable by fair play?

Does he find one word written to reason with his natural class resentments, steady his judgments, calm his hatreds, or even remotely sug-

gest that there may be another side beside his own to these great economic questions on which Moses (reversing his Biblical *rôle*) so complacently instructs the Lord ?

Emphatically he does not ! His newspaper only adds to his irritation ; seems to justify his prejudices, and increases his temper ; with the result that yet another padlock has been fastened on his simple, decent, honest, narrow mind. The odds are against him ; our disinterested newspaper is not, yet, *his* newspaper.

Now at the same time, Bob Sykes (very red of very red, and brother of Bill Sykes, Communist) is reading *his* paper : *his* paper, which treats of slums and starvation, inflated profits and corrupt franchises—*his* paper which, in its bitter one-sidedness equals, if it does not outdo, those opposing organs patronized by the county pterosaurians.

Bob Sykes (like Lord Taxedmore) believes what he reads. He finds wealth imputed to the aristocracy because of their acres, and luxury because of their great houses. That such landowning means heavy responsibility and heavier taxes, and that huge, under-staffed country houses in which the New Poor freeze are not possessions to be envied (yet, being entailed,

cannot be turned into the equivalent of even a minimum wage)—is information of which Bob Sykes never gets even a hint. This newspaper is committed to a policy, and that policy demands that Lord Taxedmore shall be presented in the conventional manner as a "bloated bloodsucker, grinding the faces of the poor." This gory but popular pastime is, Bob believes, the sole occupation of the upper class. Should his newspaper depict that class as it often is—shivering in the great white elephant of a country house, harassed as to how to make both ends meet—*then* Bob's resentment might possibly be calmed to some extent. On the other hand, he might merely denounce such newspaper tolerance as "bloody bootlickin'" and spend his future pennies on the rival rag. We cannot expect much else of Bob: his training in ratiocination has been *nil*, and his troubles have been numerous. Like Lord Taxedmore, he reads not to inform himself, but rather to confirm himself. If his newspaper is to pay, it must please. If it is to retain Bob's penny, it must please Bob. No cohort of angels will run its printing presses; the weekly bills must be met in the usual way—by hard cash. The more circulation it has the

more advertising it can command, and here, tucked into the neatest of nutshells, is the reason for the poison so cynically disseminated. This paper is free only to the extent that it can choose how far it is, henceforth, to be Bob's slave.

In the same manner the newspapers of the middle classes emphasize what they believe to be *their* side, to the exclusion of any other. Almost without exception they denounce, indiscriminately, as exhibitions of rancorous greed, the strikes which so darken the life of the suburbs (already a sufficiently dark shade of blue). This consistent policy of embittered criticism prejudices still further the "white-collar man," and reduces his sympathies to those of a fretful midge. How can one "*Live-in-Kent-and-be-Content*" (with only enough coal left to keep a single fire going) *if one has never heard the side of the striking miners?* Or "*Live-in-Surrey Free From Worry*" when the apparently groundless discontent of the Labour market has sent prices soaring to the moon?

So the suburbanite decides that the working men whose demands for a living wage have resulted in soaring prices—"*are no more nor less than beastly Bolsheviks, betraying their*

country! The swine seem to forget that they pay no taxes to speak of, have no appearances to keep up, and get their brats educated at the country's expense!"

With back-chat of their own, the penny papers of the evening respond. The reporters from the Conservative dailies drop in at various workers' meetings and take notes. In the ensuing evening edition they will find themselves somewhat colourfully described as "wolves in sheeps' clothing, taking the bread out of the workers' mouths by licking the boots of the capitalists!" The reporter's white collar (even although often a somewhat dark shade of white) constitutes his crime, and that petty class distinction is made, in the Labour Press, a moral one.

With all sides playing at this game of gammon, the merits of any particular question are often subordinated to the opportunity for catering to class and party prejudice. Facts are frequently ignored, unless they happen to bear out the policy presumably supported by the newspaper's subscribers. *On the wings of its advertising pages such a newspaper soars to success.* It must not only avoid printing opinions that may antagonize its present adver-

tisers, but must also report current happenings in such a manner as will attract new ones. No item of news likely to disturb these advertisers, *en masse*, may be unduly emphasized. If it is absolutely impossible to ignore such items, an obscure line or two somewhere or other will suffice to deal with them.

Only in time of war is a truce called. Then, by unanimous consent, a National Hate is set up : enshrined and deified as a national virtue, and the enemy country is depicted as a veritable nest of vipers. Thus Peace, when it comes, appears but a cynical compromise based on an unfortunate inability to finish the worthy work of extermination.

The honest editor (and there are plenty) performs wonders on the editorial tightrope. His job is to write editorials on the facts as they are reported to him, and he is hardly to blame if the fact which the reporting " Jack " built is not the whole—but only as much of the truth as Jack was able to see through the knot-hole of his newspaper's policy. Jack's job is a strenuous one : his orders are to report what he sees of the panorama of events. He finds that it takes all his time, energy and imagination to see (through that knot-hole) enough to

report—but he manages to see it! What he can't see he doesn't know. So much for the foundation of the fact-that-Jack-built. And his editor works even harder than does Jack, for *he* must keep faith with the newspaper owners and their policies; and the owners, in their turn, must keep faith with the advertisers and subscribers by seeing that they have delivered to them, with the morning milk, the truth-as-per-their-esteemed-order.

In accordance with this partisan policy, therefore, such a newspaper uses a partisan vocabulary. According to the Old Guard Press every strike is an outrage—Socialist, Anarchist, Communist or Bolshevik—inspired by the reds and financed from Russia. Every Labour spokesman is a "paid agitator." Every trade union is an unqualified menace to prosperity, and every effort of the unions toward an efficient membership is presented as a deliberately planned treachery to the ex-service man.

Labour, on the other hand, keeps its own stock of offensive epithets for daily, routine use. All property owners, according to its most yellow organs, are robbers. All individuals outside of the working classes are parasites. Capitalists are conscienceless pro-

fiteers. Anyone with an income (no matter how small, leading a life no matter how useful) is " idle rich." Each question is settled accordingly, irrespective of its merits. As a direct consequence, therefore, even when it is to the workers' interest to compromise, the true son of the people will seize his ballot and scratch a stubby cross—not where it will do him the most good, but where he fervently hopes that it will do " them bloodsuckers " the most harm.

Of course Bob Sykes is blind to any inconsistencies in his paper. His mental vision (never much to boast of) fails to detect any contradiction in a programme which demands the nationalization of the mines, yet insists with equal vigour on self-determination in the case of the ore-fields of the Riff ! The minerals of the Riff are thus to remain the undisputed property of a little band of tribesmen who can't use them, but the coal-fields are to be taken away from the dukes, who *have* used them, very comfortably, for centuries !

But Bob Sykes sees no inconsistency. The longer he pores over the smudgy print the more indignant does he become. " Blarsted parasites—oughter be forced to pay up and no more blarsted jaw about it, neither ! ' Com-

promise ' be blowed ! " (That " compromise " may be certain mine owners' only alternative to bankruptcy because of the depth at which, in various districts, seams have to be mined, is only mentioned in Lord Taxedmore's papers—never in those read by Bob or Bill !) So the Sykes brothers and their kind continue to stand by what they blindly believe to be their loyalties, and, with ruin facing the industry which employs them, will scowlingly reject all compromise : will vote " no surrender," and sullenly watch the works shut down.

We cannot expect much more on the part of the classes whose superstitious reverence for the printed word is no more than we might expect at that particular level of education. Neither can we expect much else from the newspapers, conditioned (as they necessarily are under our present economic system) as business enterprises which must pay, or go under. Until a State-endowed newspaper is an accomplished fact, responsibility for making an attempt toward straight thinking and fair play rests entirely with the educated classes. On those subjects on which we cannot, in the nature of things, become really informed, it is our duty *to keep an open mind*. To treat the

daily news reports merely as (but less seriously than) so many points in a game between the Haves and the Have-nots—is unworthy of our heritage. It is emphatically our job to keep in mind *the other side*—and to inform ourselves about that other side as far as we can, even to the exclusion of more personal interests.

As a nation, we claim that we love fair play. But at present we let the commercial interests behind certain newspapers influence us altogether too easily as to what *is* fair play. We are even proud of our racial capacity for well-meaning, muddle-headed partisanship. We infinitely prefer the exercise of tilting at windmills to any kill-joy concern with the nation's vital problems. What !—forget our political animosities and realize that we must put our heads together (without using the opportunity merely to bite each other !) if the white races are to continue supreme ? Or rise above our national hatreds and face the common enemy—niggardly Nature—who refuses to change her ways merely to help human civilization with its problem of over-population in popular areas ? We may have to come to something of the sort some day, if we want to hold our own, but in the meantime we prefer to

proceed with our nursery battles. Armed with our favourite newspaper, therefore, we go forth to fight, and often it flaps so persistently in our eyes that we are utterly unable to see that the enemy is signalling it wants to be friends !

We grumble, but we are, on the whole, content. We'll fight these " Bolsheviks " first, and look into their so-called " grievances " later. The *Daily Diehard* is still with us ; the country will carry on ; the fine old English gentleman has not yet become a thing of the past ! What if too often he *does* live like a sheep—doesn't he always *die* like a lion ?

. . . . .

Nero, twanging his lyre while Rome was burning, had quite evidently decided that there was nothing that he himself could really do in the matter. So there he stood—fine old Roman gentleman—and twanged. Didn't lose his head in the emergency as one of those Labour chaps might have done, running here, there and everywhere, disturbing everybody else. Assuredly not ! Old Nero just showed his mettle : his blood was up, and he seized—his lyre !

Meanwhile—Rome burned.

VI

" THE FIFTIES " CLOG THE WHEELS

For some inscrutable reason Nature does not permit us to come into our brains automatically, on attaining the age of twenty-one. It is seldom, indeed, that we cut our mental wisdom teeth before the thirties. In these days of hygiene, physical majority is hard to escape, but mental maturity is by no means bound to follow. Junkers and Fundamentalists bear witness.

Lest we pride ourselves prematurely, however, on any fancied difference between ourselves and these morons—admittedly our first cousins, but not yet mercifully removed—all we have to do to restore humility is to listen to some of our contemporaries in the late fifties : to listen to those of our contemporaries who have never grown up, presuming to harangue those of their juniors who have !

We are complacent ; we of the fifties. We are bounded on the north by material matters ; on the south by tradition and good form ; on

the east by our professed (not necessarily believed) form of Theism, and we have practically agreed to discourage the west as a dangerous direction, leading to radicalism.

Having successfully, therefore, taken shelter from the rain of realities, we proceed to hold out an unhelping hand to our juniors. But the result is unsatisfactory : they reject our philosophies, despise our politics, and distrust our religion. Our own attitude to life, they say, is enough : we are forthwith " counted out." Positive belief with details, we are told, may be comforting to *us*—but it is not convincing to *them*. We are (according to these juniors) altogether too ready to assume that our own special brand of truth makes for anything even remotely approaching righteousness.

We reply to these young people of the late twenties that their generation holds far too many *opinions*—but is lamentably devoid of *convictions*. They retort with disconcerting candour that *our* so-called " convictions " are usually merely conventions—worn somewhat thin and meaningless by time. They protest that it would be far better to hold such beliefs as are ours (honestly enough come by) as present impressions open to discussion, rather

than to nurse such prejudices into convictions to be fought over.

But we do not propose to take Youth seriously. It would never do to encourage it to condemn us, its elders, for this muddle of things as they are and as we are apparently content to have them. We infinitely prefer that the younger generation shall keep to its own place—by which we mean anywhere at all provided that it will only leave us in peace, to neglect or to mismanage, as we feel inclined, life's larger issues.

We pride ourselves, however, that we are not as other nations are—the United States, for instance. We do not preach to our young men that their only duty is to " get on." Quite the contrary—with an unctuousness inconceivable and a piety unbelievable we preach to our young men that their duty is to stop, mentally, exactly where they—no—where *we* are. Just as the United States and the Dominions too often discourage their youth from choosing any career involving financial limitation—too frequently do we frown on any choice of a career involving intellectual experiment or social handicap—although such a vocation might prove of inestimable value to the race. We

have discarded Disraeli's policy of enlightened selfishness for a selfishness as unenlightened as we can carry through legally, and we counsel youth accordingly.

Yet we profess to despise the correspondingly unworthy financial ideals preached to the young of the United States. We unkindly observe that in spite of our neighbours' fondness for rhetorical uplift, their majority definition of satisfactory achievement (indirectly implied, possibly, but very directly evidenced by their enthusiasms, their literature and their advertisements) is the *bank account*. For the young man with his own way and his own connections to make in that star-spangled Heaven—the Book of Books must be his future cheque-book.

We ourselves, however, believe that we scorn such standards. For our own young men we would prefer that the Book of Books should be a happy combination of the Peerage and the Pentateuch. We want our young men, above all things, to be simple and honest (not, of course, *too* simple nor *too* honest), and to achieve, by an adequate sophistication, soundly conservative views leading to equally sound conservative practice. This, at least, is what

we imply by our own example in thought, word and deed—just as certainly as we would deny intending such implications were we flatly accused of them.

With the phrase " short-skirted and shingled " we banish contemporaneous young womanhood from the dignity of responsibility, trusting that she may content herself with the becoming *rôle* we have assigned to her : that of eternal flapperhood, offering a chin-tilted challenge to life. Much as we profess to hate theories, we have taken a tremendous fancy to this, our theory of the modern young female. We note her cropped head and her scanty skirt, and we sum her up accordingly : attributing to her either manners and morals to match, or no manners nor morals whatsoever. Had some girls we remember, who dared the decencies of the nineties, heard their attitude to life described by some phrase-loving Pharisee as " curled and corseted," it would have been no more wide of the mark than this casual assumption of chronic flapperhood because of the shingle, and inherent devilry because of cigarette and long silk stockings.

On the other hand, as it is most certainly our intention that Youth shall take *us* seriously, we

proceed to hold up an equally tidy little picture of ourselves. Older, yes, and wiser, we hope—with a benevolent smile which is not to be interpreted as a smirk. We have loved more deeply than Youth can ever understand. We have met such sorrow that we are silent. In other words, we prefer that Youth shall take us for granted.

With the complacency of Olympians, therefore, we proceed to harangue these juniors. We beg them, above all things, to avoid *theories*. We have a theory that theories are dangerous. The mind must be cultivated as a convenience, but not depended upon as a necessity, lest it lead to Free Thought—thought should never be free. We feel that we need men of vision—provided they do not become visionaries. We feel we need men of action—provided they will realize the wisdom of letting things alone. We feel we need men of spiritual insight—provided only that they will look the other way. These reservations, however, we regard as too subtle for our juniors to understand, as yet. As they grow older they will be better able to appreciate our reticences—as well as our wisdom.

As a basis to the morality which we propose

to inculcate, we deem it especially important that Youth shall accept what we are pleased to call the *Ultimate Truths* of religion, without any cavilling at the creeds. " Details of dogma " (we whisper) " are really neither here nor there. It is the *spirit* that signifies, and the spirit is what you, yourselves, bring to the matter." In other words, the soul is invited to curl itself up in this spiritual circle, shut one eye, and go to sleep !

It can't ?—yes—it can—be done. We ourselves have done it. In this particular matter of outworn dogma one has only to cultivate the knack of interpretation. Anachronisms can become symbols. Certain subtleties at variance with modern ethics must be dealt with by spiritual interpretation only. While for those whose tender consciences call for a special religious diet there are the new bibles with their pepsinized glossaries, so that even with the Will to Believe, the risk of spiritual indigestion is reduced to the minimum.

But that this Will to Believe may be a distinct handicap to straight thinking, our juniors are most inconveniently and unkindly aware. And we are actually treated to a certain measure of contempt for our gentle plea that such faith

" makes us happier." " A most immoral reason for professing belief ! " they retort. " A self-deception beneath the dignity of any thinking animal ! "

Now Youth is not as cruel as it sounds, because, you see, we have asked it to speak quite frankly : to rely on our sympathy and understanding, since we—even we—at one time actually had doubts ourselves ; knowing nothing, then, of all that we have later learned of spiritual interpretation as a short-cut to spiritual peace. So naturally the doubts of these juniors seem sadly elementary to us, who have grown wise and skilful in such matters, and it is hard not to show impatience at their crude scepticisms : social, political and religious. It is at these times that we try to keep in mind Carlyle's saying : " *What we see, yet cannot see over, is as good as infinite !* " Carlyle —so sage in Chelsea—so childish in Craigenputtock—for once, at least, so tolerant in print !

But our *rôle* is to be patient : long-suffering ; loving ; even if the replies of Youth may seem a little rough. We are older—therefore wiser. Our only wish is to warn and guide, and, anyway, it is always possible (thank Heaven !) to change the subject.

Not that we, ourselves, actually believe in many of the details of dogma. But as one of the great popes (writing of some papal dictum) put the case in these statesmanlike words : " Just because WE are so situated that WE cannot believe, is no reason for our preventing *others* from so doing "—so do we of the late fifties feel that it would be for Youth's best good to rest on faith—even in those matters which we ourselves have begun to question. Creeds are vain—but of value.

Oddly enough, however, it is on questions of conduct, rather than of creed, that our juniors are most inclined to be rough with us. For our interpretation of religion, indeed, they seem to have a semi-contemptuous tolerance, such as the rich little children have for the poor little children playing in the gutter with their toys of make-believe. Rag bundles for dolls ; newspaper scraps for plates ; stones for bread. Not very good toys, to be sure—still——.

In the realm of ethics, however, we are on surer ground. We maintain that we have enough light to live by. We honestly believe that the highest morality possible for mankind may be summed up in Christ's clear command to love our neighbour as ourselves. Not *better*

than ourselves, mark you—we of the fifties feel that is where so many faddists like Tolstoy go wrong—but just " *as* " ourselves. Subject, of course, to prudence and to our neighbour's deserts as a citizen.

What's that ? Is Youth actually quoting something about *another* clear command : " *If a man take away thy coat let him have thy cloak also* " ? Come, come now ! that's just where commonsense must guide us. What's that ? " Christ said it " ? Oh well, Christ is reported to have said *many* things, and we can't discard our entire judicial and penal system merely because of various none-too-authentic reports of what even the greatest prophet is *reputed* to have said ! For the matter of that, if our memory serves us aright, there is an equally definite bidding somewhere in the same chapter : " *Give to him that asketh thee, and from him who would borrow of thee turn not thou away.*" How about that ? Ask the average bishop !

With what we feel to be commendable patience, we of the fifties point out to Youth that we are not living in the Millennium. We maintain that under our present economic system the individual must meet life and play

the game as he finds it : not as he would have it. If a business man, he must compete with market conditions, or he will go under. Far from giving to him who asks, he must sell for as much as he can get—after having produced or obtained his goods at the lowest price he could. If he refuses to accept these conditions —refuses the pace and the prices set by his competitors—he will face bankruptcy, and his family will suffer. If his competitor undersells (reimbursing himself by underpaying his workers) then he himself will be tempted to undersell and underpay, unless he has private resources which enable him to evade this economic dilemma. Waste, starvation wages, unemployment, disease and crime are regrettable facts, but are inseparable from the economic system as we know it, because Society is organized that way. Thus do we instruct Youth.

But these juniors insist that it is *we* who are " society," and that it is our consent that confirms the organizing. They protest that if we had even the rudiments of a social conscience, those of us who have the leisure to do so would make a point of informing ourselves on these vital questions, to the end that some workable alternatives of organization and

method might be arrived at—methods less wasteful, less cruel—less of a denial of everything we proclaim from our pulpits—than those which so signally are failing us to-day. They claim that an economic policy devised to bring the best—instead of the worst—out of human nature, is not only conceivable, but practicable : if we will only give these matters our attention, and put away childish things.

" Why," asks one junior (who happens to be a mature thirty-two years of age—a city doctor with an extensive practice among those least likely to pay him), " can't you make your ' religion ' the fighting of all this unnecessary poverty with its resulting disease, misery and crime ? All you accomplish by your cut-throat competition on the one hand and your sentimental charities on the other, is to connive at the survival of the unfittest—the unfittest, that is, from any standpoint but that of material selfishness ! "

Now this especial junior is rather a favourite of ours. From the depths of our shabbiest armchair he will hold forth, assuring us that every generation has its superstitions, and that ours, therefore, is no exception ! He remarks pleasantly that when it comes to heresy-hunt-

ing, the witch-burning pastimes of our ancestors probably did less harm to the community than the unnecessary hatred we foment by our middle-aged tendency to see a " red menace " in every hungry out-of-work. With the same gentle patience that he would show to some little child explaining *why* it is so naughty—does he listen to our arguments. But seldom does he concede a point.

Now most of us of mellow middle age, comfortable circumstances and placid temperament, fear that his ideals are quite too idealistic. His arguments, although logical enough, do not make sufficient allowance for human nature —for the fifties—and that tired feeling ! We grant that it is hardly surprising that he allows his undoubtedly heart-rending experiences among the city poor to bias his otherwise excellent judgment, but the conviction of our conservative contemporaries remains the same : that the safest world will always be the world made safe for plutocracy.

For our own part we find that Thirty-two interests, amuses, and occasionally edifies us. At these fireside debates, therefore, for the sheer pleasure of drawing him out, we frequently voice highly reactionary views which

we by no means actually hold—the moral indignation with which he retaliates being worth it. But his friendship is so loyal ; and he is in turn so exasperating, so unforgivably abusive, and so unforgivably forgiving—that we dissemble our agreements for the enjoyment of hearing him berate us.

Very much at his ease, his hands clasped behind his head, his gaze consciously (and impudently !) riveted on our library ceiling, Thirty-two will consolingly assure us that some of our elderly prejudices are even justified. That as for Utopias (which seem, he says, to be our pet horror), he himself holds no particular brief for any of them : past, present, nor future. Not, he remarks, because the Utopias are not good enough—but because we ourselves are not good enough to make them workable. He observes that few of us really know very much of anything, or are even particularly interested in finding out—because the facts might trip us up. He says that, thanks to our middle-aged prejudices clogging the wheels, Heaven is unlikely (in any near future, at least) to be reached even by co-operative effort : since our generation strenuously objects to united effort, even to the extent of doing our

Christmas shopping early. He remarks that in any Utopia fool-proof and knave-proof most of our business contemporaries would perish ; having nothing and no one to do. He says that our opposition to most of what he calls the eminently practical suggestions of the modernists—is based on the assumption that these modernists are irresponsible faddists, and that for some reason only known to ourselves we insist on attributing to these serious economists absurd theories belonging to Mother Goose-land—that sunny country of three acres, a contented cow and a uniquely happy peasant ! He advises us, therefore, to desist from our Quixotic tilting at windmills in imaginary Utopias, and, instead, to turn our valuable attention to the here and now !

" We are not likely to change things by means of any of the existing ' 'isms,' " he will remark cheerfully. " Your generation has seen to that. With the irresponsibility of late middle age which has but a short time to live and endure the consequences, you have invented the damning word ' Uplift,' and applied it to any gesture toward the under-dog. With the ignorance which is the Mother of eloquence you assert that you, and you alone, realize the

difficulties of dealing successfully with Labour. We modernists see the same difficulties that you do—only we don't throw up the sponge so easily and say things can't be bettered ! "

" But what you modernists *don't* always realize is just how your precious theories are going to be interpreted by the group of cellar malcontents ! " We are pleased with this retort of ours : in our opinion it is both neat and irrefutable.

But Thirty-two grins approvingly (damn his impudence !) and says it is *our* theories, not his, which are responsible both for the malcontents and for their disgruntled grouping. He says it is *his* aim to get them out of the cellar and into a job.

" You idealize the brains of Labour," we tell him. " You forget that the whole economic question hinges on the law of supply and demand, plus the human equation."

" Exactly ! But you won't deal successfully with the human equation among your cellar malcontents by talking of the law of supply and demand *if your interpretation of that law is starving them*. Wake up—*think*—and *work* toward the achieving of some economic policy which will allow for this human equation

—something that our present policies do not ! "

" These problems are unsolvable," we protest, " by all except the writers in your pestilential weeklies of opinion. We must get back to our old standards of individual righteousness."

But once again we find ourselves brutally contradicted. " The personal righteousness of the individual cannot help the race much unless it helps that race to progress as a whole."

" And how are you going to get the race to progress as a whole," we demand, " since the mob is usually content to stand still unless the knaves succeed in driving it sideways ? Even granted that you can think out a workable political and economic scheme that might be better than our present muddle—what guaranty can you have that your good intentions, put to the vote, will be carried out ? Will the knave turn from his scheming and the mob rise from its inertia just to make your Utopia a success ? "

" Hardly by means of any of the existing 'isms. For one thing, we have used their catchwords so often merely as weapons with which to fight each other, that we can scarcely

expect those same catchwords to bring us together! We have learned by experience that there is, apparently, only one thing which *can* bring us together—and that is—a common enemy! Well, we've got one: *Nature!* She seems to like the black and yellow races quite as much as she likes us. We don't need to be told at this late date that the white races will have to stand together—or go under. Overpopulation demands that we should overhaul our entire system of food distribution, and the end of our coal and oil supply seems to be only a few generations off."

We blow a few smoke-rings—but we listen.

"Our leisured classes must awake to the duty of *informing* themselves, before damning every remedial alternative as a sentimental and negligible 'theory.' Why should we wait for the 'reds' to enlighten us? We have had ample time to learn that civilization can't hold its own with the nations cutting each other's throats by unbridled competition; underselling each other to the detriment of the whole, and over-working half the population to the detriment of the race; all in the name of patriotism and the great Competitive System!"

"Are you proselytising, then, for a Religion

of Humanity ? " We achieve an excellent imitation of a sneer as we ask this purely rhetorical question, which is, we flatter ourselves, in accordance with the best middle-aged tradition.

" Perhaps not a religion *of* Humanity—but why not one more nearly approaching a religion *for* humanity than most of our present ecclesiastical gymnastics ? Something of the sort will have to come—if only to the extent that we must learn to work together against the common adversary. Unless we have in our minds, at least, some kind of a human plan, the best we are ever likely to do will only make for futility. As it is we get nowhere—except in each other's way ! "

" And no doubt you look forward to a Heaven-sent governmental system coming too : something tidy, efficacious and satisfactory to everybody ! Do you know why we are never likely to get it ? Because God doesn't seem to want to work that way ! "

" Your God—or mine ? "

We rise from our chair and instinctively we seize the poker, relieving our feelings by a violent attack upon the *coals*—although we are sorely tempted to use it otherwise.

Meanwhile, Thirty-two watches us with the discerningly thoughtful expression that we particularly dislike, and continues, unasked, to instruct us.

" Whether you call it ' God,' or ' Nature,' you must admit that in the basic matter of life itself we seem to find traces of a plan—in the evolution of the species by means of the survival of the fittest. It seems a definite intention, and is to a certain degree consistent. Certainly more wasteful than we ourselves might have wished ; but who knows whether the vital spark goes out, or whether it just goes somewhere else—*to do its bit over there ?* However, you seem to believe that ' God doesn't want to work that way,' by which you imply according to any logical, organized, systematic plan sufficiently obvious to us to enlist our co-operation. Doesn't it ever occur to you that it is *you* who don't want to work that way ? That at every turn you interfere with what seems to be the clear intention of the Mind that may be behind the Universe ? That in spite of the indication that only the fittest should survive (the fittest of brains and spiritual qualities, rather than of mere physique, else man would never be where he is), you shepherd

your weakest of character, patch up your defectives and degenerates, and with blind blessings usher their progeny into the next generation. That thanks to these sentimental philanthropies of yours we are bound to have an overwhelming representation—in generations to come—of the moron degenerate, under-equipped for everything except to carry on the evil work ? "

We murmur something about the sacredness of human life. We feel that society must respect the liberty of the individual.

" H'm ! So liberty for the individual is to mean freedom to imprison posterity in a C_3 physique with the mentality of a moron, is it ? That's on a par with the kind of free speech described as ' the liberty to say what you think without thinking what you say ' ! Compared to the welfare of the race, this outcry about the sacred rights of the unfit is the veriest buncombe. We hold him on leash in all other matters, by a thousand civic ordinances, and even on many acts which are perfectly legal we place a social tabu if those acts seem inadvisable for the community at large."

" But only for his own good ! Only as far as is necessary for our safety ! "

" Perfectly true ; but this eternal concentra-

tion on our *own* generation, without a thought for the next, is simply another example of our pious slush ! And when you call to mind all the legal, social and religious tabus under which your generation continues to carry on most comfortably, this theory of the ' liberty of the individual ' is a chimera for which you haven't the slightest excuse for sacrificing the good of the generations to come."

We feel that for the sake of peace it may be as well not to insist further on our alleged belief in the sacred rights of John or Mary Doe. So once again we take refuge in smoke-rings.

" One of the chief dangers in listening to your generation," continues Thirty-two, " is that you pin your faith to phrases. You worship the word too much, instead of taking the trouble to examine the idea behind that word. You shelter behind a phrase in order to dodge the uncomfortable truth. Behind the ' liberty of the individual ' you hide a much too tender timidity. And although you have had the decency to discard the abused word ' charity,' and now call your benevolent activities ' social service,' you are so obsessed by the new word that it doesn't even occur to you that many

of your social palliatives should be made unnecessary."

With increasing enjoyment we continue to listen. It is a new part thus arbitrarily assigned to us : this of gentle dreamer, hampered by the conservatisms of age. Yet with the omniscience we had considered our own prerogative, Thirty-two continues to exhort us.

" Your idea of your duty to society is unworthy of a protozoan : inexcusably nonconstructive. You are content with patching up and smoothing over, and you treat symptoms, instead of trying to discover the germ with a view to preventing a recurrence of the disease."

We beg Thirty-two to specify. Because of our temporary *rôle* of confirmed Tory we feel that we must be patient ; and we have, thus far, prided ourselves on our forbearance. But there is a limit.

" Specify ? Certainly ! I assert that your so-called *benevolences* are too often merely sentimental self-indulgences, non-constructive from the point of view of society, and decidedly inimical to the best interests of the race. You delight in ostentatious donations to hospitals, but any systematic effort toward helping the

under-dog to keep *out* of the hospitals, you damn, without even a hearing. Any organized effort to prevent disease and crime-breeding unemployment is, to you, a dangerous concession to your dreaded ogre—Socialism. At the same time, any satisfaction you can derive out of treating the *symptoms* of these economic maladies is, to you, wholly admirable."

" We do our best under the existing order."

" But it is *not* your best if you shelter behind that phrase of yours—' existing order.' You *let* it exist. You don't want to be made to feel uncomfortable. You don't want to be forced to do any hard thinking about unpleasant facts, such as unemployment. You turn your backs on the most acute, preventable distress, and talk of ' supply and demand '—as if that settled our human responsibility ! "

We defend ourselves. " Our efforts for the relief of suffering are legion. While the women of your generation are wrangling on committees, the women of our generation are more than likely to be visiting those unfit whose sorrows you have so much at heart ! "

" Undoubtedly. In the manner of the Lady Bountiful of the Christmas magazines—a part which requires grateful, responsive pro-

tégés to whom it is possible to minister with a basket. A somewhat ostentatious basket, packed with good things, carried in a deprecating, yet conspicuous, manner, and cheerily explained to neighbours met on the way. In fact," Thirty-two concludes, blowing a ring of smoke at the ceiling, " neighbourhood pieties are altogether too popular a form of outdoor altruism."

" Well, don't neighbourhood pieties help ? " We of the late fifties are convinced that individual goodness and mercy will make for the common weal more effectively than any amount of " constructive " fidgets.

" They help YOU ! " (Yes—this last is almost a yell !) " They make *you* feel happy —feel pleased with yourselves. You preach ' sacrifice ' and ' service,' forgetting that for every pat you thus get or give yourselves on the back, the *sacrificed for*, and the *helped*, take a step down in self-confidence and self-respect."

" That surely depends on how the help is given," we suggest, with as much mildness as we can command. After all, our argumentative guest must learn to hold his horses a bit, since there is nothing on which we pride ourselves

more than our extreme tactfulness in our benevolences.

" Nothing can alter the fact that, in order to accept your help, some individual who might have been made into a good citizen, has to pocket his pride and become your pet pauper, for the time being, at any rate. Mind you, I don't say that this can always be avoided ; but what I *do* say is that you ought first to try to help him in more constructive ways. And you would, if you had his interests, rather than your own at heart."

We remark that we consider this a most uncalled-for and unjust statement.

" It may be uncalled for, but it isn't unjust. Because you won't permit anyone (if you can help it) to discuss anything which suggests—even remotely—a remedy. At the first hint of such a suggestion you immediately begin tilting at windmills. You start by saying ' mankind will never agree.' Why of course they won't ! All we can ever hope to do is to prevent their disagreements from working havoc with the welfare of the public : which means the welfare of the race."

" You are asking for a good deal, you know ! After all, to safeguard the public *en masse*

would mean to coddle the undeserving. You will surely admit that much of the human material we have to deal with to-day is practically unemployable ? "

" Certainly we admit it ! The admission which is *hard* to get is the admission *we* would like to get from *you*—that, thanks to the conventional attitude of *laissez-faire*, far too much good human material—hit by hard luck—drops inevitably and irretrievably into that hopeless and dangerous class. We shall always have a certain number of ' practically unemployable ' people, but we shall have to take enough thought for them to prevent such incompetents from crowding out (as they now do) those who can work intelligently. As it is, thanks to various well-intentioned but short-sighted philanthropic activities, the unemployable person —no matter to what class he belongs—is a destructive force, since the big job of finding work for responsible workmen is held back, half the time, to accommodate the unfit."

" So you would leave the unfit, as you call them, to starve ? "

" Not at all. The unfit (like the poor) we shall have to the end of time. But we need not let them occupy positions which needlessly

disturb everybody else. The unemployable of the upper classes—the well-born moron, filling his days with grown-up play—arouses a frenzy of dangerous hatred in the moron of the submerged tenth. This lower-class moron, in his turn, exasperates the loafer of the upper class by his eternal grievances. That too often the ragged out-of-work, *also*, is an 'unemployable' (but without any privileges of environment which might help to disguise the fact) is made an excuse for the ignoring of his miseries. If we are ever to arrive at a rationally ordered society we shall have to find suitable work for such incompetents, and even safe occupation for the markedly unfit. Very necessary, you know, yet not so very easy to do; and such a policy having been adopted *for other than sentimental reasons*, it is unlikely that we shall continue to permit these incompetent and unfit the privilege of bequeathing their blighting handicaps to future generations!"

"Your programme of reform is certainly comprehensive! Just where, may we humbly ask, do you intend to begin?"

"Firstly, by *enlightening ourselves* as to conditions. Next, by working toward a fairer start—in health and training—for the children.

No one in his senses expects an equal *chance ;* everyone realizes that the unequal human brain itself makes such a thing an absurdity ! To provide some kind of opportunity is about all we can do ; but if later our youngsters cannot, or will not, take advantage of that opportunity, well, at least we shall have done our best, and shall have a right to self-respect, if not to self-congratulation. So if you, my dear Senior, would only work—or even think—toward an initial chance for these youngsters, you could help instead of hindering Nature in her sifting for the betterment of the race. You would then have some right to expect the adult energy you praise so highly, even if you reduce the number of parasites who now feed your philanthropic vanity."

It is our turn, now, to gaze at the ceiling. We feel that Thirty-two is altogether overstating the case. It is absurd to accuse us of willingness that human suffering should be perpetuated merely as a background for our philanthropic activities. We succeed in saying something to this effect.

" Well then—why, if the receiver of your help feels uncomfortable, and seems sullen over exchanging his independence for your benevo-

lence, do you consider him an ungrateful malcontent, and forthwith suspect him of being a ' red ' ? On the other hand, if he has already been pauperized through and through, and knows from experience that gurgling gratitude on the present occasion will bring more to gurgle over later on—you approve of him. ' Here,' you say, ' is a Worthy Case who *appreciates*—and not one of those damned discontented radicals.' You don't care if you turn human virtues inside out and upside down—as you do when your high-handed philanthropies turn what might have been commendable independence into sullenness. All you want is the comfortable feeling that you have done your ' best ' for that particular case. This sort of thing ought *not* to be your best. Side-stepping the final human issue is the favourite form of exercise for your entire generation ! "

Once again we feel it is high time to change the subject. Suspecting this, our guest becomes violent.

" You are trying to sidestep ! Just because you are cornered you take refuge in silence, or try to talk of something else. All your generation seems to want to talk about is *things*. Things ! Never ideas about those things. Not

even things as they are—or as they possibly may be ! "

" Things being as they are, perhaps there isn't any ' maybe,' " we suggest with disarming mildness.

But Thirty-two insists that it is our business to make this ' maybe ' possible. He declares we have no earthly right to settle down to bewailing our imaginary past as noble, pink-skinned savages living the Simple Life—or, on the other hand, of congratulating ourselves upon our present inhuman semi-civilization merely because it accords to a few of us a very tolerable present. He tells us to brace up and not be so shamelessly satisfied with things as they are for two-thirds of humanity. He tells us to keep an open mind—even if it hurts ! He says it is folly to pretend that Occidental civilization as we now know it is the last word in human achievement.

Our reply is equally violent. " For God's sake, what do you want us to *do ?* " We intend this to be a silencer—as it would be, to our own generation.

" We want you to *inform yourselves !* In order to do that you will first have to learn tolerance." (We start !—of all the impudence

—preaching "tolerance" to *us!*) "Your generation seldom remembers that a differing opinion is not necessarily an antagonistic one. All opinion is determined by atmospheric pressure—the atmosphere of our environment, of tradition, of circumstances. In ordinary decency, therefore, you ought to try to enlighten yourselves a little more about the atmospheric pressure behind the differing opinions of others—of the reds, for instance. *What made them red?* Get the other chap's point of view!"

As no one is more anxious to do justice to our opponents than we are, we say so—with considerable emphasis.

"Yes, we all say that, and use that very phrase 'we *want* to do you justice,' but——! It is such smirking amenities as these that make the other fellow *go* red, for he knows that in our heart of hearts we intend to pass him by on the other side."

Fortunately these damning indictments interest instead of irritating us. All the same, we murmur an uncivil request that Thirty-two shall be so kind as to be more specific—if it is not too much of a strain.

So he proceeds to be specific. Takes as an example a case from what he pleases to call

" our " cellar malcontents : out-of-work—discontented—desperate. Asserts that we persist in treating the problems of this cellar citizen entirely from our own standpoint—seldom from his. That Society dismisses him with an epigram ; that the politician thinks of him only as a vote, and that he (Thirty-two) regards him chiefly in terms of his probably diseased lungs. The trouble with the malcontent, however, is that *he* thinks of himself as someone who matters, and *his* atmospheric pressure blinds him to everything except the fact that he is starving.

We point out that there always have been, and always will be, these malcontents. Human nature is never satisfied, and human nature doesn't change.

But Thirty-two insists that human nature *does* change ; and that this is evidenced by our vastly differing reactions, generation after generation, to the same human problems. He cites (in order, he says, to be " specific " !) that not so very many decades ago hideous cruelties were actually the fashion : gay parties were got up to see lunatics whipped ; bear-baiting, dog and cock-fights were the recognized amusements of the upper classes. Religious toler-

ance was but the dream of a handful of visionaries. Hanging was adjudged the just punishment for stealing a loaf of bread. Women were under absurd subjections. Democracy itself was held to be a dangerous heresy (although that, he remarks, is nearer the truth than believing it to be a panacea !), and anything like a social conscience was likely to land its possessor in jail.

Well, we agree that perhaps human nature *may* change a little, here and there. But we assure our junior that this is not admitting that these changes are always for the better. In any case, we feel most strongly that public opinion has to veer round by itself : that such changes as he seems to want cannot even be predicted—much less forced.

But, greatly to our surprise, we find Thirty-two ready to agree with this ! Admits that all changes, if they are to be permanent, must come slowly ; but he insists that this is no excuse for our lazy rationalizations which amount to waiting for the mob to lead. Greatly to our satisfaction, however, he remarks that those reformers who expect the Millennium in the near future are likely to find themselves fooled.

We permit ourselves the luxury of a long breath. We are relieved not to be threatened with any millennium. With somewhat relaxed nerves, therefore, we continue to listen.

With a seriousness which we would hardly have expected of this somewhat cynical junior, he asserts that, in the long run, *straight thinking* is the power that has moved—and that will continue to move—mountains, always provided that one does not expect this standard miracle to be worked in a day. He insists that the chief obstacle to headway is the opposition our generation offers to anyone who attempts to do any thinking out of bounds—beyond the *status quo*. He declares that the present pressure of business competition makes it impossible for the average man either to acquire the information or to achieve the vision of a trained social economist ; and that the most we can ask of him, therefore, is to abstain from prejudice and hasty ultimatum, since ill-informed obstruction is as mischievous as ill-informed enthusiasm.

" But in these days the man of business is no longer merely a narrow commercialist—surely he has to be a man of broad outlook—a man of affairs ! "

" Not necessarily so, my dear Senior, unless he is very much at the top of things."

We had even suspected that such might be the case !—but we do not say so.

Thirty-two protests, furthermore, that a practical—not a sentimental—sympathy for the proletariat (a sympathy which by no means implies any especial admiration for its manners or its brains) is, consequently, the standpoint of an aristocracy of spirit—a standpoint seldom shared by the busy bourgeoisie ; and that this sympathy, therefore, involves a certain spiritual isolation. Since the rank and file of mankind has little time for any troubles but its own, very few people want to be forced to *think*—if such thinking is intended to pave the way for any change. It is difficult, he maintains, for the man of vision, thus detached, intellectually, from the popular prejudices, to avoid taking refuge in a silence that may even appear supercilious. Such a man, finding his ideals flouted and sneered at by the majority of his neighbours, will often be driven, by sheer loneliness, into vagueness or silence regarding what he finds are such unpopular beliefs. If he is sensitive, rather than eternally contend with misunderstanding and antagonism, he may

even hide his convictions behind a mask of conventionality.

We remark that, as far as we can judge, nothing of this kind seems to have blighted our distinguished guest. And we are pleased with the cheerful grin with which Thirty-two confesses that he has not, as yet, been crushed, although he can vouch for the fact that a prophet not only has no honour in his own country, but is certain to be knifed at the dinner-tables of most of his friends !

He says it is his belief, however, that the modernist alternatives to our present policies (alternatives which, to-day, seem to us of the fifties so chimerical) will, in a better to-morrow, be but the commonplaces of social justice. He is very earnest about this : it even seems to be his *faith*. He reminds us that less than a century ago many suggestions which have since been adopted and are now routine matters, were flouted as Utopian dreams—dangerous dreams—*nightmares* to the well-regulated, better-be-safe-than-sorry Tory mind. He reminds us that not so very long ago any method of dealing with city sewage (otherwise than by the private cesspool) was considered ' Socialistic ' in the extreme. That little attention

would have been accorded anyone rash enough to prophesy that some day a letter, dropped in a little box at the corner of the street, would, under government ownership, and for the price of three halfpence, reach the farthest corners of the British Empire. He reminds us that each of these things had to begin *as an idea* and be formulated as a *theory* before it could be put into practice. He insists that, wild as were some of the fancies of those who conceived Utopias, these dreamers had hold of actuality to a greater extent than those whose sole message was the stultifying other-worldliness of the religious systems combating them. He claims that, although a Utopia in the clouds has no value whatever unless with it can be visualized practical means of attaining it, *the vision must come first*. Our job, he says, is to help and not to hinder, and he emphasizes the fact that during the economic exigencies of the war—by means of a common vision and a common aim—many miracles were accomplished which, up to then, had been looked upon as beyond even the power of miracle.

We are obliged to admit that we do, perhaps, remember something of the sort. The patriotic enthusiasms of war-time naturally——

But we are interrupted. We are told that patriotic enthusiasm was by no means the only reason for such miracles ; because even during that period of national excitement it was often entirely against our will that we were forced to adopt rational methods in regard to supplying various vital human needs. We are reminded that the adoption of such methods resulted in much waste being cut down ; profits were *subject*, at least, to investigation, and prices were *subject*, at least, to regulation. That such investigation and regulation was not universal is, we are told, a matter for regret, as the profiteer might then have been prevented from blotting our records during that national crisis. We are reminded that, at a time when army Headquarters (embarrassed by a shell-shortage due to the prohibitive price of such shells) had actually been obliged to issue orders restricting firing—*no matter what the enemy might be doing* —a government investigation as to the price of these shells caused that price to be reduced—in some cases by half ! We are told that the method used in this investigation was simplicity itself : government auditors were furnished with cost sheets compiled from similar work done in government workshops, and were

instructed to compare these costs, in detail, with the estimates received from civilian manufacturers. We are reminded that the result as regarded these savings of various kinds was that we were *enabled to carry on*—and that equally satisfactory results are within our reach to-day.

Again we are obliged to admit that we do, perhaps, remember something of the sort, but we do not see what this has to do with——

But again Thirty-two interrupts us ; cries out that this is just his point—that we *don't see !* He repeats that, during that time of compulsory co-operation, and (to us) unexpected miracle, the public cheerfully and unanimously put its shoulder to the wheel, not only because of the incentive given by patriotic enthusiasm, but also because of the incentive due to the elimination of many discouragingly unfair, jealousy-breeding privileges. Waste became unpopular. Even transportation ceased to be a hit-or-miss matter as regarded overlapping and unnecessary duplication, because it ceased, for the time, to be entirely a matter of competition between rival companies aiming at dividends rather than at service.

To our remark that surely the production of dividends *is* service, Thirty-two insists that it is

only service of a kind—to a limited few. That our present system aims at dividends for owner and shareholder alone, rather than at the incentive which a share of the returns would mean to its workers (whether of head or of hand)—incentive which would assuredly result in increased productivity and better service generally : lower prices to the public, among them. Invested capital, he says, has certain rights, just as labour has certain rights, but neither should be allowed to crowd out, or even take precedence over, the rights of the community. Among those rights are cleanliness and comfort : those two commodities which are so conspicuously lacking in *to-day's* government monopolies, run as they are on the principle that it is nobody's business, and that nobody cares ! He resents, he tells us, our frivolous attitude toward the lessons we might have learned from war-time experiments in modernist principles—principles which needed no change in human nature. Honesty, decency, and the willingness to co-operate, he declares, belong to human nature just as certainly as do dishonesty, greed and laziness ; *and which set of qualities may be expected depends on incentive :* working conditions being part of that incen-

tive. That there are other than financial stimuli goes without saying, otherwise we would have no candidates for the professions. But the ideal of " service " alone is, he feels, unlikely to give any stimulus whatever to the undeveloped mind ; and our manual workers are likely to continue to form a vast mob of heads too thick for much education to penetrate. For this reason we will probably get the best results by linking productivity up to a sound financial reason ! Although during the war individual, class, and even national interests were pooled in order that the essentials of life might be supplied to all without unintelligent waste—even that time of cheerful co-operation had to have its incentive—a belief that the best that *could* be done *was* being done—under the general working equity.

Thirty-two is very emphatic about this. He goes on to say that where objections have been made to the continuance of such waste-eliminating methods, the demurs have been not because such methods, applied to industrialism, might fail in service, or even that they might fail in producing profits, but only because such profits could no longer belong *exclu-*

sively to owner and shareholders. He remarks that the defender of the *status quo* infinitely prefers the system which entitles him to a quarterly windfall of dividends—to any method which, after paying capital for its use and risk, would deflect a share of those profits to the executives, the workers, and—by better service or lowered prices—to that long-suffering beast of burden, the Public. He says that the defender of the *status quo* holds that Justice may be *blind*, but she need not be *heartless* as well ! *He wants his profits*—let the rest of the world go hang !

" Well, what is your conclusion ? Would you have us attempt to blow away, like a feather, the entire competitive system ? " Our inflection is ironic : we have no intention of appearing athirst for instruction.

Thirty-two proceeds, however, to instruct us. " Competition is not, in itself, ethically wrong, you know ! But a wider acquaintance with history and a fuller knowledge of to-day's economic difficulties might persuade even your generation that it is, *in certain cases*, too wasteful to pay for its keep. Why should society stand meekly by while capital on the one hand and labour on the other wrangle over the amount

that can be filched from the public ? A reasonable State control seems to be needed to protect the worker against the capitalist, the capitalist against the worker, and the public—God help it—against both."

" Just where, then, would lie the incentive for your capitalist and your worker thus put into leading strings to the State ? "

" In *returns*—returns made reasonably certain when everyone has his shoulder to the wheel ; and reasonably safe from the endless interruptions due to to-day's industrial antagonisms. We've already learned from experience that an excellent *esprit de corps* follows if the disciplining of the workers is placed in the hands of the workers themselves ; and we have also discovered the educative effect of the *mutual Board* on which management and workers meet each other's representatives and learn to see their industry *as a whole*—not as a catch-as-catch-can scrimmage."

" And since the Trade Unions never agree to *anything* if they can help it, you are quite sure they will agree to these managerial gymnastics ? "

" My dear Senior, won't you ever realize that it is *you*—not Labour—who is really respon-

sible for keeping this ogre of Unionism on the war-path ? The unions try (like the employer) to do the best they can for their own side under existing conditions. Granted that to-day they restrict and they hamper, don't you see that is because the average employer has taught them that they must for ever be on the watch to *circumvent ?* During the war to a great extent they dropped this sort of thing, and under government control, working with the single purpose of production for a need, and with the attention of the Public focussed on results, they more than doubled their output per man. But to-day, with what the working men consider reasonable incentive lacking, their interest in productivity has gone, and they turn, as of old, to their one excitement—that of attempting to beat the capitalist at his own game of self-interest."

" Well, then, as long as they seem amply able to take care of their own interests, why hurry to change things ? "

" We wouldn't—even if we could—change things in a hurry. No reform is likely to succeed if its principle is too far ahead of the uninformed and prejudiced majority. All we can hope to do is to educate, and *that* job, you

know, begins at home. Future generations, however, will probably wonder how we managed to keep our self-respect in the meantime : since too prolonged a patience amounts to conniving at many cruelties."

" Unavoidable injustices, perhaps, but hardly *cruelties*."

" Do you call it unavoidable, or less than cruel, to pay a woman shirtmaker one shilling a day when the shareholders of that concern were receiving seventeen per cent. ? "

" Something of the sort was in the newspapers, certainly, but that must have been rather an unusual case."

" Possibly a little extreme. But the *drabness* of modern industry isn't unusual. Why should we continue to acquiesce in industrial methods which claim all a man's time, distort his standards and stultify his life—*if there is any alternative ?* There *are* alternatives—there *are* remedies—and it is folly to waive aside with a sneer any discussion or consideration of them : just as it would be folly to have nothing but a sneer for medical advice. Suggestions have been made by able economists, as well as by practical men of affairs disinterestedly desirous of helping our industrial patient ; therefore a

consultation—not a sneer—would seem to be advisable. Unless, of course, we are such fatalists that we prefer to wait until the patient has to submit to a sudden—and enforced—surgical operation ! "

Once again we demur, as befits our *rôle* of judicial Conservative of the ripe fifties. We feel we must protest against such emphasis, since to our generation the mere thought that there may be *need* for emphasis is in itself a dangerous one to harbour.

But Thirty-two continues to be emphatic. He declares that the best way to prevent a radical mob from setting our present civilization back a hundred years or so is to withdraw prejudiced and dangerous opposition to what he calls some of Labour's human and reasonable demands. He insists that the saner leaders of the British Labour movement have never dreamed of doing away with executive management, or of expecting " equality " in the prejudicial, social sense in which this demand is ascribed to them. Neither do they expect any such absurdity as equality of recompense (since the value of services must vary), but are only asking for Labour's share, commensurate with its services, of those profits

which, after paying a fair return to capital, ought surely to be shared by the brains and hands which produced them. They see no reason why such profits should be *exclusively* appropriated, as they now are, by wholly inactive owners of vested rights, or by shareholders whose invested money should be worth a proportionate return and no more. The modernist, Thirty-two repeats, neither asks nor expects that capital should be without due return on its risk, but he does ask that this return should be in just ratio to other claims on industry. When we have arranged for this, he says, we shall have succeeded in paring the claws of the " red "—those claws which, when sharpened on a legitimate grievance, can become so dangerous.

" In the meantime you seem to think that *we* are sitting still and doing nothing about such matters ! " We speak with some bitterness ; the activities of our own generation being so widely different from such altruistic capers.

" Not at all ! Many of you are getting in line. Your employer who makes it possible for his workers to acquire an interest in his business is your best bet. Naturally such a policy pays : it focusses the workman's attention on economical methods as well as on economic results. At the

same time, if any improvement is to be permanent, some planning ahead must be done, and it is the visionaries who are doing the heavy work *for* you—without any help *from* you—and doing it, moreover, for the frequently quite thankless under-dog ! "

" So you frequently find the under-dog thankless, do you ? Singularly ungrateful, is he not, for such championship ? "

" But we are not, you see, his champions. We aren't battling for the workman alone, as producer, but for the public generally (including the workman) as consumer. The present system of industrialism is illogical, wasteful and inefficient, and because of these inherent defects it fails to obtain the returns it might were you capable of increasing productivity (that catchword of the moment !), as you *could* increase it by inspiring some motive for co-operation between its capital, its brains, and its brawn ! "

" A Daniel come to judgment ! "

" It is all very well to sneer, but the trouble with your generation is that you refuse to think, to investigate, to face unpleasant facts. You infinitely prefer to damn your opponents by ascribing to them absurd ideas they never had.

In other words, you prefer to tilt at windmills. One of the most popular of these is the idea that we modernists want to abolish property : and by ' property ' you mean everything—from a tooth-brush to a king's domain ! You assume that we are clamouring for an order of things which would forbid the chemist any right to his discovery ; the inventor any right to his patent ; the author any copyright ; the cottager any individual cabbage patch, and the thrifty any invested savings. Windmills ! my dear Senior, *windmills !* We are not Communists ! It is not property itself, *but the use to which property is put*, which has caused revolutions : since revolutions have arisen not only against the abuses caused by property, but also for its rights ! "

We gaze, sneeringly, into the fire. This, after all, is the only way to combat any appeal to history.

" In former times," Thirty-two continues (quite unaware that we realize perfectly that he knows what he is talking about), " certain property rights were necessary to safeguard the interests of the worker : whether peasant, craftsman or trader. But such property carried responsibilities : it gave as much as it received

—as our chronicles of Elizabethan England bear witness. The same principle holds good to-day : *let property function under a system that will ensure that it give a good account of itself, and it will remain as a human institution : a human incentive to human effort.* But if it does *not* thus give a good account of itself (and too often, to-day, it does not) then it will have to be controlled in those cases where vested rights or irresponsible shareholders can, by taking the lion's share of its returns, thwart its justice, drain its resources, and impair its usefulness. For this reason we modernists believe that it would be best to safeguard property by placing it out of the reach of those whose lack of social conscience would continue to pervert it. Otherwise, my dear Senior, *all* property, justifiable or not, runs the risk of being sacrificed to an ignorant and impracticable Communism."

We decide to stop sneering ; there is an opportunity here for a sincere question in accordance with strictly Conservative thought. " You admit, then, that there *is* a ' red menace ' ? "

" We do—and we believe that the force behind that red menace—the force which gives

it power, that is—is the traditional Tory mind : that mind which sees no wrongs unless they affect himself ; which fears only the evils that may be : never those which actually exist. The Tory mind, both in its virtues and in its failings, is the ivy around the tree of society : it is picturesque ; it has a beauty and quality of its own, but, behind an outward semblance of perennial peace, it brings—death ! "

Again we interrupt, and so hastily that we even mix our metaphors. " Hold your horses, for God's sake—and get on with your windmills ! "

Thirty-two grins, settles himself deeper in his chair, lights another pipe, and obligingly remarks that he hopes he has at least succeeded in demolishing our windmill of Abolition of Property. He says he touched upon the matter (touched !) because the modernists, far from wishing to abolish any property justified by commonsense, aim to make such ownership not only much safer that it is now, but also to make it as universal as possible ; since property, under their proposed system of control, will not only act as an incentive, but will also serve the interests of the public, and, accordingly, justify itself.

At this point our argumentative guest takes his pipe from between his teeth, leans forward, and saws the air with an impressive forefinger. " You want to hear about these windmills of yours, do you ? Well, here's another one ; apparently a favourite one with your generation, since you persist in breaking your best lances upon it. It is your unfounded and impudent assumption that any plan for the betterment of our present semi-civilized muddle is nothing but the pipe-dream of some hare-brained ignoramus representing an equally ignorant mob. You don't seem to realize that these matters are the most important questions of to-day, and that they are engrossing the best brains of the country ! Able economists, Members of both Houses, men holding university fellowships, and men of practical business and industrial experience are all concentrating on the remedial alternatives which your generation seems to think are the inventions of the street-corner demagogue. It is you, yourselves, who constitute the unthinking and uninformed mob ! Your prejudiced Tory is like a man in a bog : a man who refuses to see the ropes that are being thrown him, merely because he hopes that a chariot may some day descend from

Heaven and extricate him more comfortably. The bog, however, is for the majority of mankind an unescapable reality, and the constructive modernist is not content to rest on the pious hope that time may some day drain that bog : he feels that it is his imperative duty to search for the right length of rope and to throw it in the right direction ! His ' ropes ' for the rescue of those struggling in to-day's slough of despond are carefully considered and practical alternatives to our present policies : alternatives competently worked out by educated and disinterested men ; tested, in many instances, as far as conditions would permit ; alternatives capable of such modification as experience may later suggest regarding detail of administration. When your generation prefers the dangers of the bog of economic injustice, waste, misery and crime—to the risk that the rope thrown may later have to be spliced a bit—it is because you yourselves belong to that mob of uninformed to whom the words ' co-operation,' ' Socialism,' ' Communism,' ' Syndicalism,' ' Bolshevism,' ' Nationalization,' ' Guild Principle ' and ' State Control " all mean *anarchy*—in other words, mean nothing ! "

" But supposing such terms *do* mean something to us—something very dangerous——"

" Is that not likely to be because you don't, actually, know very much either about the real situation or the proposed remedies ? We all, you know, begin with these very natural suspicions and fears. Isn't it your imperative duty to refrain from ill-considered ultimata while as yet you remain uninformed ? "

" My dear man, you can't turn us all into earnest political economists, you know ! "

" Precisely ; and this is the very reason why you should abstain from clogging the wheels with your very natural, but entirely ignorant, prejudices. When you know more you will obstruct less ! "

We feel that Thirty-two has scored another point. But we will not admit agreement ; our cue is to continue to demonstrate a middle-aged stolidity. " Let us hear some more about those windmills," we suggest, with intentionally insulting composure.

" By all means. You are especially inclined to tilt at what you call the industrial deadlock ; which is, according to your reasoning, that if the worker wants higher wages and shorter hours for his work, the cost of his living must

mount proportionately, so that he will, in the end, be no whit better off than he was before, no matter how high he may succeed in forcing up his wages. Further, as you are never tired of remarking, the consumer is the eventual victim. This, really, is your pet windmill, and amazing is the persistence with which you tilt at its four sails—worker, wages, consumer, prices. But, unfortunately for you, my dear Don Quixote, your premise is not sound—as it might be were industry carrying no more than its justly apportioned, necessary burdens. There is a little black nigger in the woodpile behind this windmill, and that little nigger is the ' right ' given to proprietary interest or invested capital to demand, because of such right, a higher than proportionate share : *a demand which decreases the workman's productivity by discouragingly decreasing his incentive !* "

We inwardly regret that we are sworn, for the time being, to the side of the enemy. We are forced, therefore, to take refuge in sarcasm, and we mildly congratulate our guest on his apparently inexhaustible stock of " windmills—penny the bunch ! "

" That's just about what these popular mis-

apprehensions are worth," Thirty-two agrees serenely. " And here's another from that bunch which your conscience compels you to price so cheaply : the too frequently imaginary benefits gained from *competition*. Competition has its uses, but you give it altogether too idolatrous a worship. The good it has achieved does not nearly balance the infinite waste it causes in duplication of plant, overlapping distribution, the psychological chicanery represented by advertisement ; besides all the other expensive methods of competitive commerce. Investigation and information might even lead you to the conclusion that pooled resources, which would enable local units of any large industry to command the equipment necessary for the best results, would more than compensate the community for the occasional benefits supposedly derived from idealized competition fighting its assumedly knavish competitors. You assume that each knave, by being subjected to such competition, is necessarily held in check by another knave of conveniently equal capacity ! "

" That is our faith and our hope," we murmur, " but perhaps not our actual belief."

Thirty-two, however, having warmed to his

subject, does not need any further provocation from us to goad him to eloquence. " Still another of your windmills is the assumption that any form of public ownership would mean the establishment of a cumbrous and distant bureaucracy : State-ridden, yet controlled by nothing on earth. This, we admit, was the valid objection to the earlier forms of Socialism, during the time that this theory of government existed merely as the hobby of the economist and the hope of the Have-nots. That was before our present multiplicity of industrial dilemmas caused certain modernized versions of these theories to appeal to enlightened opinion. But just as the post office and the telephone service demonstrate both what State control can, and has not yet succeeded in doing, your generation must remember that such divergent results are not due to the *principle* of public ownership, but to difference in method of local administration. Public ownership is best suited to enterprises which represent a basic, steady demand, and which do not require the urge and incentive of profits to stimulate production. But since even the sad list of bankruptcies, unemployment crises, labour troubles and vanishing markets fail to shake your faith

in the Competitive System, we humbly suggest that the creaking of the economic machinery which might be expected, at first, under State control, would mean no evils comparable to those most of us blink at to-day."

" But even supposing State Control would help Labour—*would it help the brain worker ?* "

" Why not ? There is nothing in State control (functioning not by a distant bureaucracy, but by local administration) which could hamper the brain worker nearly as much as the limitations placed on his possibilities by our present competitive steam-roller. To your naïvely tender anxiety for the rights of the brain worker the reply is very easy—for industry under State control would be far less likely to harass and cramp such a man than our present method, which kills initiative unless it can promise a certain eight per cent. *for somebody else !*

" And here endeth our windmills ? "

Thirty-two grins. " We are *never* likely to succeed in demolishing all your windmills. Only this morning I read an editorial tilting away on the perfectly unwarrantable assumption that modernist methods would involve an unworkable mix-up of brains and brawn. Con-

trasts were drawn between this imagined hotchpotch and the simple serenities of the heyday of craftsmanship—when services were strictly graded, from those of apprentice to those of master-craftsman. Emphasis was given to the necessity of ordered discipline in every large enterprise, and the whole trouble—that the workers of to-day are insubordinate *because the motive behind* present-day discipline seems, to them, unfair—was completely ignored. The motive behind the discipline dealt to the Elizabethan workman was professional pride in his work for the good of himself and his craft. The motive behind the discipline of to-day's industrialism is profit for owners or shareholders—a profit likely to be quite out of proportion to the market value of the money invested, and tactlessly out of proportion to the wages of the brains and the hands responsible for those profits. If the time ever arrives when industry is again organized on the Guild principle, there will be no attempt to achieve a dull and indiscriminating labour democracy by means of any mischievous levelling of the possibilities of brains to the capacities of brawn. Authority and discipline will have their place ; *but the motive—the purpose for which that dis-*

cipline will be enforced—must be different from the motive behind the discipline of to-day, else it will be equally unsuccessful. We hold that a bedevilment of brains by the mob, or a smothering of brains by a bureaucracy, would take us out of the frying-pan into the fire."

" And surely this is exactly what would happen were your ' modernist ' ideas to be put into practice."

" They would not *be* our ideas if they had not already proved themselves eminently successful in the cases where they *have* been put into practice. We try—God knows—to see things from your point of view, both for the sake of popularity and the sake of peace, but we can't come to any conclusion but that the common-sense solution of our present antagonisms is co-operation : applied by any or every method you like—but still *co-operation*. Initiative and energy would only be hampered when aimed at *exploitation*, and the opportunity given to a greater number for the exercise of initiative and energy would soon offset any loss the country might suffer from the suppression of the profiteer-rampant."

" You foresee no difficulties ? "

" There will *always* be difficulties, but surely

our past experience has already accustomed us to most of the varieties? Even your generation must find some difficulty in idealizing the *status quo*."

"Well, perhaps we do. But just how do you propose to bring about your amicable system founded on mutual goodwill?"

"Sneer away, my excellent Senior! You want me to tell you that some theoretical 'ism' will do it, but if you will only inform yourself you will find that it is not upon those lines that the modernists are thinking. You are fond of accusing us of wanting to impose on society some rigid *system*, but no single system has ever been devised—or is likely to be devised—that will fit all cases. Our one true faith is the *absolute necessity of keeping an open mind*. If the individualistic principle works well for any particular enterprise, the slight State control that experience has taught us is advisable will not trouble it very much. If, on the other hand, the socialistic or 'collectivist' idea of State ownership seems more suitable (as it is likely to do in regard to the regulation of supplies) then let that method be applied—and may it be as successful as our post office! For industries requiring special

incentives, and where the workers (both executives and employees) are willing to shoulder all responsibility provided they can share the profits, it would seem to be commonsense to let them demonstrate what they can do under these conditions, even if the horrible word ' Syndicalism ' took the credit. The method that develops character and responsibility in one case may not do so in another. The one thing that experience *has* taught us is that there must be an impartial authority at the head of things : since unbridled energies, no matter under what name, may cavort away in distinctly anti-social directions. Profits must not be gained at the expense of the nation. State control, however, will stop at control of thought ! Indeed, public control ought never to be exercised *except to prevent the use of force in anti-social directions*."

With an exaggerated expression of infinite patience (which he fully intends us to note) Thirty-two will, at this point, abruptly change the subject ; feeling, perhaps, that we may have had enough of the new faith to ensure us a sleepless night.

According to these modernists, our first duty is to get rid of formulæ. We are to learn to

" see life steadily, and see it whole." We are to relinquish our selfish, *laissez-faire* attitude toward the present squirrel-cage industrial system which, they insist, not only wastes material, but also enslaves men's bodies and warps their minds.

We are warned, however, to forswear our sentimental idealizations, especially those regarding the assumedly pink-skinned savage in his back-to-all-fours environment, and the mediæval asceticism which denied Nature and starved life. We are told that we must discourage that pseudo-religious Puritanism under which art and the sciences languish ; and must learn to understand and encourage everything which would lead to a full, creative life for ourselves and others. That such a liberation of the creative spirit would tend to restrain the lust of acquisition and possession that so obsesses the Western world is, they admit, their fervent hope.

They warn us, however, not to cling to what they call the stained-glass concepts of the Middle Ages ; or to deify, blindly, handwork. They remind us that the Song of a Shirt referred even disparagingly to handwork under ideal profit-making conditions ! They affirm that machinery and magnitude of production

are here to stay ; but that they will have to be guided in a more intelligent manner toward the betterment, and not toward the destruction, of life. They believe that an economic federation may be far off, but that if we are to hold our own against Nature it will have to be by some such means. And they further insist that the leisured section of society would do well to deliberate upon such questions : because an aristocracy of purpose might accomplish, eventually, many things.

The war, apparently, brought home to our juniors many things which have not even yet become fully clear to us. For instance, their hope—far in the future, perhaps, but still a hope—of a non-predatory, economic internationalism, whereby a man will be able to keep his patriotism as a healthy sentiment similar to his love for his birthplace : but will abstain from letting this localized and personal faith work havoc by tariff. No betterment of economic conditions can be expected, they tell us, while the dangers from another nation's aggression, and the necessity for our own defence, are paramount. They claim that such an economic internationalism would be the best safeguard of the world's peace.

Oddly enough, however, these modernists tell us not to expect too much. They tell us that such things are for the future : that any reform which is attempted too hastily, or too far ahead of the mob (the unthinking mob of *all* classes), is doomed to failure. They believe that the acquisition and holding of private property can be regulated ; that the power of the State can be reasonably controlled, but that neither can be done away with altogether in a civilization which takes account of that kill-joy of the reformer—the human equation.

They tell us that before we can succeed in educating our public we must first educate *ourselves*, to the end that a new spirit may be brought into the policies of our schools and universities. And they sum up by insisting that we must bestir ourselves, and make sacrifices of *effort*—beginning with *mental* effort—as willingly in times of peace as in times of war.

. . . . .

It may even be that these juniors are right. It may even be that our own generation *is* hanging back, impeding progress. It may be that the dangers of the " radicalism " which we so fear are real ones—yet that the weapons with

which we attempt to fight our opponents are obsolete : that our tactics tend to gain recruits for the " reds " rather than to deplete their forces. It may be so.

Enviously we think of the Just Man of the classics, and the ease with which he hammered home each ultimatum. We should like to have had him meet Thirty-two !

VII

WANTED—AN ARISTOCRACY

Among the most pleasant of our social optimisms is the optimism which holds that the inheritance of an ample environment will be accompanied by an adequate sense of responsibility.

This amiable assumption is, however, seldom an actual belief. In some cases it represents a blind faith, in others a flickering hope, and in others it stands merely for charity. To place too great a reliance on the capacity for responsibility necessarily following either inheritance or environment is to shut our eyes to experience.

Property and the conservation of property is the basic idea on which our English social system was founded. At the time it was conceived it was an excellent idea—in fact, the only one practicable. In those good old days (days neither of peace nor of plenty) if progress were to be made at all it was highly necessary that there should be a privileged few who need not

scratch for a living like the rest, but who could, when not at war, be guaranteed leisure for governing the country, for promoting the sciences and the arts, and for cultivating and preserving the amenities.

A perfect theory—" nobly planned " ! A little optimistic, perhaps, as regards the few ; a little wasteful, possibly, as regards the many. But, at the time, it was undoubtedly the best that could be devised, and it has not been without results.

Rightly or wrongly, wastefully or not, the English system has produced something highly specialized. An upper class, many of the members of which show distinguishing qualities that have taken generations to breed. During the necessarily slow process of economic and industrial evolution millions of toiling lives have been left drab and stunted in order that this system could, through this specialized class, nurse an ideal type for the benefit of an imperial race.

For the good of the Country : a class distinct, secure, serene ; guaranteed by the happy accident of birth a leisure to be finely spent. A sound enough principle, undoubtedly. An hereditary aristocracy, lifted by its material

possessions above the corrupting influences of economic struggle, beyond the temptations of profit, above the debasement of the bribe. A class whose muscles should be hardened by outdoor sports ; whose youth should have the benefit of a long and liberal education. Until at last the finished product of the system : the Eldest Son (inheriting his father's presumably fine qualities as well as his admittedly broad acres) would devote an appreciable part of his ample leisure to his country, for his country's greatest good. Not for himself only ; nor solely for his own order : but unselfishly, intelligently, for the benefit of the race. This, it has been affirmed, was the ideal behind the idea of the law of primogeniture and the conservation of the property which should, in its turn, conserve the great names of England—*for the sake of England.*

Like many another theory, *excellent*—if things had only worked out that way. In England's case, sometimes they have, yet often they have not—else to-day we would not be threatened with what virtually amounts to class chaos. Reproaches from below ; recriminations from above, and cynicism everywhere. Although the beginnings of the English system were

probably just as piratical as its most bitter critics assert, it might have been possible, even on the cornerstone of the mere conservation and transmission of property, to have raised an edifice that would amply have justified itself.

As things are, however, we are confronted with a disquieting amount of scepticism regarding the practical results of this, for long our most cherished belief. We cling with pathetic loyalty to our ideal of the land-owning aristocrat—the man with " a stake in the country " —as a wise, conscientious landlord, consistently considerate of his tenantry, faithful in the discharge of his public duties, generous in his charities, liberal in his attitude toward science and the arts. It hurts us to think otherwise ; yet when confronted by the records of history, by various statistics, and even by certain local realities——

An amazing number of us, however, pay little attention to the records of history ; refuse to acquaint ourselves with statistics, and consider any recognition of distressing local realities to be decidedly bad form. Neither the knowledge bought by experience nor the dilemmas of the Nation are likely to influence either the clique-mind or the clan-mind *of either*

side, and in these days of class-consciousness even the would-be impartial observer can hardly escape the bias of congenital prejudice. Our individual conclusions depend, not only on our capacity to digest disagreeable truths, but also on our sense of humour—that *un*-commonsense among the critically inclined.

We have a British tradition, and we stand by our national gods. John Bull : bluff, brave, peppery, but with his heart in the right place. Britannia, also : calm-eyed, serene, impressive—the British Matron at her best. Next to these come our tribal gods : the country squire, dogged in his discharge of his local duties ; a hard rider, a hard drinker, and a good neighbour. His wife, the Lady Bountiful, busying herself with her hepaticas, her family and her charities, with the same gentle care for each. The rector, the Member down for the week-end, the London hostess, and the old Anglo-Indian colonel, all are among those racial gods to whom we give unquestioning fealty as symbolizing, for us, the best of the spirit of England.

So we do not like to be told that these gods whom we worship are, after all, tribal deities—that our population has greatly increased and

that there are many millions to whom these gods are less than a name. We prefer to assume that the very ignorance of the unbeliever implies a wilful rejection of these, to us, enduring national symbols ; and we seldom reflect that perhaps these gods of ours have had but a limited message : a message of goodwill to each other, rather than one of comfort and hope to *those who sit in darkness*.

We tell ourselves that we are at a loss to understand the indifference and the antagonism of the proletariat. Where, we ask ourselves, could they find better gods, or a more reasonable faith—a practical faith which can make life so logical, so comfortable and so secure if each class will only do its duty ? And surely our upper classes *are* doing their duty ?—for don't they live pleasantly, spend freely, give charitably, and stand for order and peace above all things when it comes to any public question ? What more (we ask ourselves) do those discontented unbelievers want ? Which, after all, is the pleasanter picture : the peer in the House of Lords defending the beauty of the English country-side : its parks and its preserves, its privileges and its amenities, or, on the other hand, those grumbling Labour Mem-

bers in the House of Commons, ranting about the factory districts, the slums, and the unemployed ? Naturally such matters as these last must be attended to, but all in good time, all in good time ! Certainly not to-day : we don't like this indecent radical haste to remedy things which may quite possibly remedy themselves if only left alone for long enough.

The strength of the country, we tell ourselves, is *not* the grumbler. We don't, of course, in these enlightened days expect the working man to conduct himself " humbly and reverently toward his betters," but we do feel that he might well profit by the example of those betters. Not, of course, by living pleasantly and spending freely (even if his wages permit it) because for generations we have preached that thrift is the duty of the working man, even if his job is such a poorly paid one that such " thrift " would mean cutting down the family meals to below the point either of nourishment or of satisfaction. All we ask of the working man is that he shall be contented to do *his* duty as *we* see it, while we do *our* duty in our chosen way. A picture flashes across our mind of the English country gentlefolk : brave, honest and kindly, and we wish

that these working men—restless, discontented and aggressive—were as pleasant to think upon. "*Be good and you will be happy!*" is our advice to these grumblers: our earnest, well-meant advice.

Yet, after all, are our gentlefolk not a little too easily satisfied with their fulfilment of their duty, as they themselves construe it? Are some of us not a little too apt to idealize somewhat jog-trot virtues, considering that we are, most of us, very comfortable, and that life's reality is not so much "be good and you will be happy," as "*be happy and you will be good*"? Are our gentlefolk, as a class, honestly trying to understand the human troubles behind the "demands" of Labour, or are we contenting ourselves with a dogged determination to fight, to the last drop of our blood, for what has been (for us, at least) a very comfortable order of things?

Among those of us who boast of (or unwillingly confess to) a partisan leaning toward the Conservative side, there is a tendency to ignore, altogether too lightheartedly, the records of experience. We are unwilling to admit, even to ourselves, that many of the holders of great names (enjoying the environment which has brought the opportunity, at least, for a broad

outlook and for the development of the qualities necessary for wise and efficient statesmanship) stand to-day for little more vital than the amenities of an ample atmosphere. Our very defence of the system : that the average peer is no worse than the average commoner, is, considering the opportunities of the peer, an indictment : certainly not a defence.

No upper class anywhere has done better than the British in its fulfilment of neighbourly duties to rheumatic old Giles in his cabbage-patch, or asthmatic old Betty in her cottage kitchen. No upper class in the world has responded more cheerfully to charities of the conventional kind. But, *apart from certain notable exceptions*, our propertied classes have chosen to demonstrate the pleasant, easy virtues of leisure, rather than face the hard thinking necessary if the problems of the nation are to be fairly met—*as a whole*. The drab economic problems of the manufacturing districts and the dreary miseries of the city poor have been taken altogether too much for granted. The time has come when we need to be reminded that England expects every man to do his duty —*even if that duty involves hard thinking on that uninteresting subject, economics*, and some

steady concentration on the difficult problems of industry. By neglecting these duties we play into the hands of the " reds."

The hackneyed excuse for the ignoring of these questions—that our privileged classes have cheerfully carried the White Man's Burden *in other lands*—is altogether beside the point. If a carpenter's short, illiberal views are such as might hamper national development, we do not dream of defending him on the grounds that his work at his carpenter's bench is unexceptionable and that his sons are sailors ! We make no such absurd excuses for him, but remind him that no matter what may be his grievances in regard to hours, wages, or working conditions, he must realize that any amelioration of his troubles necessarily involves much wider issues than he dreams of—grave matters of national finance, control of credits, regulation of tariffs and far-reaching questions of international importance. So we do not care how excellent a workman he may be as regards his daily routine : we insist—and rightly—that he and his kind must learn to avoid personal absorption in class grievances : must learn to regard these questions as they may affect the nation *as a whole*.

All very good. What we lack, unfortunately, is consistency. If it is not right for the workman to judge matters solely from the standpoint of his own class, neither is it right for us of the educated classes to judge matters solely from ours. *Apart from certain notable exceptions*, far from the best interests of the country *as a whole* having been their first ambition as well as their duty, our propertied classes have too often and too obviously permitted their interest in the larger issues of government to degenerate into placid village squirearchy ; or even into a game of politics, played for place and for power. Nor do many of us make the slightest effort toward broadening our outlook by means of discussion. The intelligent conversations of a bygone generation regarding the interests of the country at large are seldom heard. Political conversation, to-day, too often confines itself to a denunciation of the " Have-nots " by the " Haves," who fear they scent danger. Instead of discussions in which mind meets mind, and arguments are presented to convince—not merely to silence—we have a glib quoting of partisan editorials : editorials which usually have been written in a hurry, under pressure of newspaper policy, and are

too frequently but distantly related to the fair presentation of the question in its entirety, even if accurate enough in selected details. Just as the lower classes play the game of politics for hours and for wages, so do too many of our privileged classes (already possessed of sufficient leisure and money) play for safety, for place, for prestige, and even merely for the sake of the game. A sense of responsibility is by no means a corollary of an ample environment, and that element of our privileged minority which has not been required to earn its privileges is all the more bound to show that it deserves them.

Our conventional theory of aristocracy takes for granted a fitness to lead. It assumes that in return for privilege there will be a conscientious and able shouldering of responsibilities. Although we realize perfectly that the hereditary peer, if of less than average intellect, seldom darkens the doors of the House of Lords, we insist that he may be, after all, a pretty good fellow, and we are willing to hold those doors open for him should he ever really want to get in. We shut our eyes to the fact that these snobbish complaisances of ours may often cost the nation altogether too much, since

even to the everyday life of the country, apart from politics, such complaisances are mischievous, based (as they are) on assumptions untenable even as theories, and encouraging (as they do) tolerances and emulations essentially injurious because essentially snobbish. The remark that " the flunkeyism propagated by the Throne is the price we pay for its political convenience " deserves to be reflected upon, since we ourselves—not the Throne—are to blame. But even this flunkeyism (and the *laissez-faire* that is more than willing to let well enough alone as long as it is well enough—for *us*) is at last showing signs of giving way to the collective social conscience.

On the other hand, the more sophisticated of our economists recognize that Democracy has dangerous demi-gods. Democracy, with its worship of, and domination by, the " good fellow " (known in the States by the cynical nickname of " glad-hander "), an individual who can always count on his qualities being taken for granted, provided that he has slapped the public back with sufficiently convincing heartiness. Experience ought by this time to have convinced us that government, to be just and efficacious, must be removed equally far from

the interference of either the demagogue or the despot. Sophistication is increasingly inclined to avoid the hasty ultimatums of the majority mob, since history and experience record that on any intricate matter, or on any question of innovation, the majority is fairly certain, at first, to be wrong. Democracy, therefore, can be trusted with national policies only when guided by its *own* aristocracy of intelligent, well-intentioned, and well-informed. That such intelligence, good intentions and balanced judgment must first have been demonstrated (not merely assumed) goes without saying: our British assumptions in regard to democracy seldom erring on the side of over-liberality.

Now progress is due to the leaven of the minority. Even majority action is usually based on what began as a minority idea—conceived by the few. Whether our belief in this intelligent few inclines us to the secret conviction that *the fewer the better*, matters little provided that we remember that a benevolent despotism of *one* may be efficient for the time, but seldom maintains a consistently high level, and seldom, under new management, repeats its successes. The intelligent minority, how-

ever, must prove its right to this adjective. No matter how high its ideals, or how willing its enterprise as regards the shouldering of the White Man's problems in other lands, it will hardly be accepted as intelligent unless it demonstrates an equal interest in *trouble at home*. It must demonstrate a willingness to inform itself, and to cultivate—yet at the same time control—its imagination. Sentimentality must be rigorously ruled out : because what is needed is straight, hard thinking about easily ascertainable facts.

As a nation we shall continue to suffer if we permit our industrial problems to be decided by class feeling—from either side. Our intelligent minority must represent the interests of the nation as a *whole*. The " red menace " has made it sufficiently clear that the first duty of our educated and privileged classes is to concern themselves with the difficult matter of securing a *representative* will-organization : a will-organization sufficiently limited to be efficient, yet sufficiently comprehensive to *be* representative.

With the readjustment of society following the " industrial revolution " brought about by the advent of machinery, an amazing oppor-

tunity for leadership presented itself. The possibility of shorter hours for the workers; of a more efficient system of food distribution, and a cheaper and more dependable supply of various community requirements, might well have absorbed the attention of our educated and privileged classes. But the mad rush for wealth made possible by the new machinery induced even Samuel Butler (that snuggest and smuggest of citizens) to write his parable of the machines which eventually created more slaves than they had freed. The mania for wealth at any price obsessed both the middle and the upper classes. The factory system created a new miscellany of horrors. With the money made by investments in " industrials " came a new temptation to the landowners: the embarkation upon ventures promising a more tangible return than the mere upkeep of property to please refractory and strangely ungrateful tenants. Nor were there, apparently, enough promptings inspired by *noblesse oblige* to lead to even the most cursory interest in the conditions surrounding the new investments. With a cynicism practically unanimous, our propertied classes ignored all industrial issues except the amount of their dividends, and,

middle and upper classes alike, engrossed themselves in enjoying and defending property *as* property. As a consequence, understanding between the classes became increasingly difficult ; sympathies atrophied, and antagonisms took their place.

The result of all this is seen in to-day's merciless taxations : taxations which may eventually deprive our old aristocracy of most of its hereditary possessions and of all its hereditary privileges. True, new wealth, industrial and American, can be introduced into this aristocracy by means of marriage ; but our upper class is, to-day, being punished for the damage caused by matters having hitherto gone too conspicuously well for the governing class, but not by any means so well for many of those governed. As a consequence, a mob irritation has been engendered, and if anything short of practical confiscation of aristocratic property is to appease it, the achievement of a working compromise is the immediate duty confronting us. We cannot successfully sidestep this duty to the nation if we are to preserve our own self-respect. We must inform ourselves—we must think—we must face realities.

Our problems of over-population, of unem-

ployment, of toppled idols and discredited shrines are serious. The dissatisfaction of the middle class is increasing, and the discontent of the labouring class has become dangerous. Yet to treat the stolid British workman suffering from unemployment (a genuine grievance) to the coercions of Fascism would, in the present circumstances, be the height of tactless folly. Fascism, to be justified or to be successful, must deal with temperaments of the Latin type. Instead of arousing unnecessary antagonism in the stolid British workman by this grown-up version of " Let's play Indians ! " it seems as if the time has come for our privileged classes to set an example of that spirit of unselfishness so long and so earnestly recommended to the lower orders, but in which (in spite of admonitions) these lower classes have too often been so lamentably lacking. In his private capacity as an individual the man in the street still " dearly loves a lord " ; but in his public capacity as a voter he is beginning to demand that this peer shall be able to give some reasonable account of his stewardship, if he is to remain in possession of the privileges entrusted to him *for the good of the English race*. Since the *past* has not required that he

should earn his material advantages, the *present* is all the more insistent that he should deserve them. Leadership rewarded and guarded by privilege is logical. Leadership because of *fortuitous* privileges is illogical, and we can no longer evade these questions on which depend not only the welfare and the happiness of the community, but the future prestige of the race. To damn as "theorizing" any intelligent attempt to discuss them is absurd.

Seriousness about serious things, however, has come to be considered bad form. "To play while we work and to work while we play" has even become an ideal of conduct. This is especially marked among those who suspect themselves not quite equal to their inherited responsibilities, yet who feel averse to relinquishing any of their traditional privileges. They prefer that nothing be taken seriously unless it is inherently trivial. If sufficiently trivial, nothing—not even the saving sense of humour—is to prevent that matter from being taken seriously. "Why do you say you are going 'hunting' when you mean *shooting?*" was the question asked of an old prospector by an Englishman newly arrived in South Africa. "Because here the huntin' *has*

to come first : we've got no barnyard games ! " was the caustic reply. The grizzled old prospector felt that seriousness about the " shoot " was as illogical as superciliousness about his *hunt.*

Now to take play seriously is the prerogative of childhood. Rivalry in sports rather than in books is a healthy sign, necessary to the growth of the race, and should be encouraged up to the time when physical development may reasonably be expected to have resulted in mental maturity. It is quite possible to pick up matters of information later on in life ; but it is in the cradle that we first must inculcate habits of self-control ; and games, from nursery days to the playing fields, are of importance as character as well as body builders. But we should not consider sports ends in themselves, nor permit them to monopolize too much of our attention after the time has come to put away childish things. Tommy Atkins may be excused for being infinitely more interested in who won his local sweepstake than in the causes for the war in which he knows he is but a helpless pawn ; but if the members of the Staff remain equally engrossed in the non-essential, such preoccupations are hardly in keeping with the responsibilities of power.

Thanks to this too frequent, and too often socially imposed absorption in the trivial things of life, questions requiring the utmost gravity are swept aside, or, worse still, settled, with an almost unbelievable frivolity. The acute problem of unemployment is settled for Lord X. on his way to the shoot, by his old neighbour's eloquent contention that since every shilling on the taxes throws another under-gardener out of work, the taxes should immediately be taken off property. The "dole" is judged across the tea-table, and judged by its abuses only: never a word is whispered of the anarchy which this faulty expedient has probably saved us. Few of us seem to have either time or inclination to make investigations, and—as the moron never reads for information—the state of the tennis-courts and the probabilities of the weather take precedence, as matters of discussion, over the interests of the country.

Not that many of us are actually *idle*—if the word "idle" is taken in its sense of "inactive." Far from being inactive, a goodly number of us are often up to the ears in mischief: the kind of mischief caused by this pursuit of wholly frivolous interests during

times of national economic distress. We are busy working hard at play. With each succeeding generation this earnestness about play is becoming more marked. We have even come to be unashamed of our indifference to national questions—if the tennis-courts are calling ! To a conspicuous degree sports have crowded out serious and conscientious concern with affairs which should, as matters of paramount duty, claim the attention of the classes to whom immunity from petty struggles has been assured. That what used to be an unthreatened economic security has already been undermined by an almost confiscatory system of taxation is only the result of, and the punishment for, this *laissez-faire* which is willing to " let well enough alone " even when, by any fair standard, it is *not* " well enough."

Even our decisions in matters of national importance are apt to be based on class prejudice rather than on any effort toward insight. Yet each class in its turn protests amazement and disgust at what it stigmatizes as obtuse selfishness on the part of the others. Among our titled mine-owners are men of courage, rather than of vision. Their frank admission—when asked whether they had come before the

Coal Commission for the purpose of safeguarding their *own* interests—merits our admiration, even although that this should have been (most infelicitously) the truth, compels our regret. That great property owners should take the stand and fight single-mindedly, as some did, to perpetuate their royalties (in the face of preventable economic distress) strikes a jarring note to those of us who would fain cling to the idealistic conception of an aristocracy not only actuated by the highest motives, but morally pledged to the duty of disinterested thought and conduct: *noblesse oblige*. The attitude of some of these brave and artless persons, however, was too much in accordance with the best bourgeois tradition which claims that a man must live—no matter how. The " conscientious " landlords, concerned for their tenants' welfare, were sunk, apparently, in the angry owners of property, bickering for their rights. That behind the very human anxiety for their own prerogatives lay an equal anxiety for the welfare of their industry's dependants (welfare contingent upon, but not by any means assured by, those royalties) was not as apparent as their well-wishers would have liked. There is no law

which prevents a man from being his own worst enemy if he concentrates too single-mindedly on being his own best friend.

Many rude shocks have been given to our faith in the steadfast disinterestedness of the average property owner : shocks caused by the revelation of how numerous are those landlords who apparently hold themselves free from any moral responsibility for the state of their urban tenants, and who are content to let their country tenantry and workers live under unhealthful conditions and work under preventable hardships. Yet even such property owners often subscribe generously to local charities, being apparently willing enough to share their superfluity provided that this superfluity remains assured *and does not carry with it any high-handed dictation as to responsibilities*—such as living wages, or habitable houses, for wholly unattractive dependants.

It is hardly to be wondered at, therefore, that many a miner, suffering from such occupational diseases as " blackspittle," tuberculosis, or pneumonia, has a resentment against our entire social and economic system : a human resentment far deeper than the cheap envy we persist in attributing to him—that mean, skulk-

ing jealousy of the " Have-nots." His ignorance may be profound and his prejudices may be legion ; his knowledge on complicated economic situations in varying areas is necessarily limited. But one of his contentions, at least, is fundamentally sound : that, human nature being what it is, the lives of large numbers of human beings (his own among them) should not depend too utterly on the pleasure, profit, or memory of even a fine old English gentleman. We cannot blame the " Have-nots " if, in the face of such experiences, they fail to give their landlords and employers the credit that is, in many cases, due them. There are many great names worthily carried ; but also (unfortunately preventing an unwavering faith in the undeviating disinterestedness of our educated classes) the workers realize that conspicuous privileges are being enjoyed without any obvious responsibilities being assumed in return. As civilization advances the idea will doubtless be discredited that personal advantage may either be gained, or held, with *honour* —at the expense of the community. Our educated minority, if it is to lead, must recognize its moral obligation to the country *as a whole.*

WANTED—AN ARISTOCRACY

Disraeli's dream of an enlightened aristocracy voluntarily legislating in the interests of the under-dog struck the simple Tory squires of his day as a nightmare. To-day's nightmare is just the opposite : of the unenlightened under-dog legislating not at all in the interests of the equally unenlightened Tory squires ! Class consciousness has not yet become conscientiousness. Certainly not among our upper class, with its majority insistence upon its rights (let the blows of the system fall where they may !), nor amongst the great middle class (which likes to be called " great " as much as it dislikes to be dubbed " middle "), nor among the horny-handed, horny-headed sons of toil ; nor among the greatest mob of all : the Laodiceans of opinion—neither cold nor hot. " All very well," say these tepid trimmers, " to be broadminded. One has to be, nowadays, or else be swept aside as a damned reactionary. But surely we can be public-spirited without acquiescing in your beastly socialistic taxation ? Surely we can be in favour of progress and all that without actually *supporting* any particular measure ? The country will carry on—why join the Jeremiahs ? "

So the country *does* carry on—after a fashion.

Nor is it likely to do any better unless, and until, the classes can reach a working basis of agreement as to what things in life are worthy of attention, and what qualities deserve the privileges of leadership. An upper class with its sympathies atrophied by possessions, and a lower class with its understanding blinded by grievances, may lawfully claim to be *represented*, but they cannot, either of them, adequately " represent " the entire nation.

Our educated middle class, however, lacks social solidarity. The fact that very many estimable people belong to this middle class (from bishops at the bottom, to dramatic critics at the top) impresses it not at all. Rather than be thought " middle," it often prefers to identify itself with the privileged classes even to the extent of upholding their predatory prejudices. But such complaisances are not by any means always merely imitative. Suburbia —everywhere—sincerely abhors the working class, and looks upon any championship of the great unwashed as treason : treason to Suburbia's own standard of conservative gentility.

A justification of this conservatism of the middle class, however, lies in the very natural

anxiety of the small investor: the man who looks for the profit to which his risk entitles him if his investment has been somewhat of a venture; or who looks for the steady returns to which his investment entitles him if it has been made in any non-speculative enterprise. Investments of this latter kind are usually made with a desire for returns of the nature of an annuity, rather than for expectation of profit, and represent the savings of the small investor of the tradesman class—the man who is looking for security in his old age as a reward for a lifetime of self-denying thrift. This small investor, scrimping and saving either on an uncertainty or on a pittance, wants above all things to feel that the few investments he has been able to make will yield him a sure return for the lean years which may be ahead: for illness, and for old age. He respects himself for these investments: he realizes that not only do they mean security to him, but that they also represent a part of that capital on which industry itself is dependent, and he feels that the safety of the one is bound up in the safety of the other. Any suggestion, therefore, which even hints at the possibility of what to him would be " tinkering at " the *status quo* is

anathema. He infinitely prefers injustice and evils (which, to his limited outlook, appear to belong to the very nature of things) to any *taking of chances*. His homely cautions he supports with homely aphorisms—of which " out of the frying-pan into the fire " is his favourite. We have little right, therefore, to expect from him or his class either the vision or the initiative which we must demand from our leaders. The " little man " is likely to remain the little man.

Now, it is seldom of any use to assure these small investors that the changes suggested by the modernists would not only *protect* the thrifty as to their property, but would also greatly increase their ranks. It is almost impossible to convince the small investor that the returns on his little venture could be made much safer than at present, since risks could be proportionately lowered in those jog-trot, non-speculative enterprises to which he entrusts his savings to-day. His desire being for an annuity, rather than for spectacular profits, his great fear is that any interference with industrial exploitation may also interfere with these small, legitimate investments of his. Seldom can he be induced to see that the modernist, far from wishing to abolish pro-

perty, *as property*, upholds such property if it carries its responsibilities, and claims no more than its proportionate share. The small investor persistently refuses to believe that the modernist, far from wishing to do away with property, wishes to increase it: to bring it within the reach of *all* energy, intelligence and initiative, believing that such property provides the individual citizen with incentive for effort; furnishes him with the opportunity to pursue his own interests and hobbies, and secures him against illness and want. These small investors, however, are usually men of little time and less information. They seldom have either inclination or opportunity to extend their reading beyond their chosen newspapers. They are far from realizing, therefore, that the modern belief is that *private business, if conducted properly, can be a public service*. These small investors are, at present, obsessed by fear, which holds them in a vice-like grip.

It is on these very natural prudences, however, that the middle class can make its sole claim to solidarity. Both the upper middle class (the professional men and the devotees of the arts and the sciences) and the lower middle class (the tradesmen, the petty officials and the

clerks) are absolutely at one in this attitude of caution. This particular brand of conservatism is not by any means analogous to the instinctive prejudice of the hereditary landowner, influenced by concern for his butter rather than for his bread, but is the entirely natural timidity of those who hope to safeguard their future bread—even if they can look forward to but little butter. Such people instinctively acclaim as " sound " any opinions which uphold the *status quo*—and denounce as " unsound " any suggestion based on a hope of improvement. They are followers, not leaders.

At one with the tradesman in this matter of economic fear is the average over-busy professional man—the immense army of merchants, whether manufacturers, traders, or dealers in international diplomacy—and the average sheltered woman, whether shut in by the walls of her house, or the equally real and confining walls of her social environment. So insistent and so universal is this anxiety regarding investments that any suggestion aiming at economic progress is regarded with distrust, and even carries with it the stigma of disloyalty —as an evidence of treason to bourgeois tradition.

The tradesman, especially, finds it wise to conform to this tradition if there happens to be competition in his neighbourhood. In the small English villages, for instance, where things get about, the Squire may occasionally move with the times without blighting his oaks, but neither of the village butchers can afford to be known to be " progressive," even if he were in the least likely to incline that way. The existence of his competitor makes the butcher fully alive to the danger of being dubbed " radical," and having, as a consequence, the vicar's missing sealyham reported as discovered in his sausages. The same necessity that makes him a tradesman makes him, and keeps him, a tradesman-Tory. He is unlikely to dally with vision when his one idea is a safe six per cent.

Now the tradesman-Tory, owing to his numerically strong position, has become an imporant factor in deciding the destinies of the race. With a somewhat smug satisfaction, he admits his power, and even claims that it is he, and he alone, who guarantees the nation a modicum of stability, and a chance, at least, of six per cent. In his humbler capacity as village butcher he is perfectly content with the

conditions at the slaughter-houses ; as a Regent Street jeweller he will resent any interference with commerce ; as a Manchester manufacturer he will deal with his " native " labour on the general assumption that the White Man's Burden is, rather, the White Man's *chance*—and his methods will add yet another difficulty to the lot of the local British Administration.

It stands to reason that a disinterested passion for fair play on behalf of the under-dog is, logically, an aristocratic rather than a bourgeois phenomenon. The temptation to think with the majority is certain to come to those who are dependent on the average customer for trade, on the average client for fees, on the average commercial organization for salaries, or on the average community for popularity. The typical philosophy of the bourgeoisie is " What's the use of worrying ? *Let's think of our own mercies and be thankful!* " Not among such philosophers will our aristocracy of responsibility and intention be found !

Interest in government as government (and not merely as party politics) needs the detachment usually possible only at the top or at the bottom of the economic ladder. Muddle-headed, misinformed, is the state of the average

busy, preoccupied voter. No one political party has the monopoly of conscientiousness: the decent crowd on each side (and there is likely to be a decent crowd on every side) believes it is after the same thing: the Good of the Country. The only reason that any of us have for getting excited as to which political machinery will give the best results is that experience has proved that public indifference invariably leads to parasites and exploitation at the top, and parasites and misery at the foot, of this economic ladder.

Unfortunately, however, a certain type of sentimentalist persists in consecrating himself to conversation, rather than in dedicating himself to duty. To such a man the majority—any majority—is infallible, and he ignores the fact that in England, at least, our vaunted democracy has to be kept up to efficiency standards (officially and unofficially) by means of the caucus—that cynical but often necessary circumvention of the franchise. Such a man idealizes Democracy—becomes obsessed by his panacea the Will of the People—and although the unwieldiness of this Majority Will and the impossibility of securing its direct and timely expression have been proven again and

again, he persists in visualizing a gentle Demos led by a singing, smiling majority, with a contented, soon-to-be-converted minority meekly following in the rear. Even although experience ought to have taught him that this tidiest of theories is untenable, he clings to this ideal of a Democracy judiciously led by a Majority. The belief that progress is more apt to come by means of the leaven of a minority is, to him, rank heresy. *But that a heresy may be the new truth, and a faith merely the old lie which still lingers*, is something which never occurs to him. A faith, to him, is for ever a *fact*.

Perhaps the most thoroughly discredited of all the amiable political faiths of our fathers is that a rose by any other name will " smell as sweet." Far from smelling as sweetly as before, the political rose is apt to stink to Heaven when called by any name other than that given to it by its sponsors. The most excellent measure (if only sufficiently thorough) is certain to be dubbed " paternalism "—that nightmare of the man who, without such paternalism, would be sure to waste his vote. " Democracy " as an ideal fades under the epithet " mob-rule," and any plea for leadership and legislation by the educated minority

is bound to be assailed by the man in the street as the forerunner of a return to feudalism. To the average uninterested, uninformed—yet enfranchised—laity, any social or economic alternative even remotely suggesting the dread word " Socialistic "—means treason. This non-political laity has not yet sensed the modern doctrine that no " ism " can be expected to cover all cases : that neither our present Individualism, nor any proposed application of Socialism, nor Syndicalism, nor any other tight and tidy scheme can, by itself, set industry to rights. Although the modernist may uphold the political advisability of government by the intelligent few—privileged *in order that they may do their best for the less intelligent many*—he is at the same time likely to be in favour of various more or less socialistic methods of dealing with the nation's basic industries (the distribution of the food supply, and so forth) under public ownership working through local administrations. It is enough for the non-political laity, however, that such proposed methods *are* more or less " socialistic " : it will forthwith damn without hesitation any effort toward betterment of existing policies ; since " socialistic " to the uninformed is

synonymous with " Bolshevistic " and, if possible, worse !

The interpretation of the word *Socialism* (like the interpretation of the word " religion ") apparently depends only on the limitations of the vocabulary of the individual opposed to—but explaining it. Held by the leaders of the party as a theory of government fundamentally *opposed* to anarchy (with the fault of demanding too much, rather than too little, government), socialism, or any modification thereof, is, to the average preoccupied member of the bourgeoisie, only a synonym for anarchy and chaos. Like a celluloid cat racing through the lower regions with fire-crackers tied to its tail, the modern Socialist finds himself incommoded by the remembered bitterness of Proudhon ; the blazing radicalisms of Marx ; the pleasant optimisms of John Stuart Mill, and all the funny fictions ascribed to him by his least-informed opponents. While the leading spokesmen for the Fabian philosophies (" Socialism without Tears " !) insist that any alternative methods to our present ones belong to those far-off, divine events to be attained by evolution in thought—the tradesman-Tory contends that *any* collectivist ideals involve immediate

revolution in politics. To eight out of ten average voters, the very word " socialistic " means either a Bolshevik menace in itself, or the encouragement of a Bolshevik menace—and to attempt to maintain otherwise is to twitter to the stars. There will be many lions in the path of our intelligent few ; and the greatest of these is *prejudice*.

Woman, with her genius for loyalty, has often an innate tendency to bigotry. Tell the average woman that democracy, owing to the device of the caucus, is only oligarchy in fancy dress—and you will merely annoy her. Hint that a majority vote consents to the domineering of the hundred over the ninety and nine—and you will irritate her. Maintain that, short of a benevolent despotism which might get things done, you are all in favour of sufficient progressive legislation *to get things started*—and you will shock her. With crisp displeasure, she will accuse you of *socialistic* leanings : of advocating a sentimental brotherhood in which the plumber will have to be asked to dinner.

" He wouldn't come," you will reply, gloomily. " His wife would not let him. She hates anything suggesting Socialism even more than you do, because she thinks it will mean

equal rewards for the fit and the unfit : for the man with a Union Card, and for the man who only writes poetry."

But your gentle opponent is not likely to be listening. She will be pursuing thoughts of her own—or thoughts that she thinks are her own, although they are as old as the race of tree-chatterers from which we spring. At last she will turn to you, with asperity in her voice.

" You can't *really* believe that everybody should be equal ! We aren't, you know ! And how can you Socialists and Anarchists (oh, no —it's all the same thing !) so ignore *human nature !* "

" Would that we could ! " (This—your reply.) The phrase " innocent women and children " flashes across your mind—perhaps because of a subconscious longing that so many innocent women would not persist in talking like children.

However, set your mind at rest ; she is quite unlikely to continue any such seditious conversation. With her woman's intuition she has sensed the situation and divined your revolutionary politics. She feels that you are a scoffer : a non-constructive theorist. Undoubtedly you believe in the abolition of all

private property, and in the nationalization of women. You are dangerous.

Party politics aside, it is amazing, the complacent egotism of the human race. To crack even one suburban complacency is the feat of a lifetime. Instinctively we prefer to admire ourselves as philosophers, rather than risk ourselves as leaders. Entrenched behind our personal financial security, or else paralysed by our personal financial fear, the money issue which threatens that security or increases that fear is all we usually can think about. The same man who most bitterly resents the demands of labour yells the loudest if his own pocket is threatened.

Observe, for instance, the behaviour of the average comfortable citizen as he unfolds his morning newspaper and absorbs the headline "NEW TAX CUTS DIVIDENDS." The paragraph which follows begins with the words, "*Rather than reduce wages, which are already near the minimum*——" and goes on to tell how some dividends, confidently expected by our citizen, are to be lopped to the limit. As the opening words of the paragraph certainly imply that the wages of the workers involved have *already* been lopped to the limit, this cut in

dividends would seem a fair enough, sporting proposition.

But is our sample citizen resigned—even if depressed ? Quite the contrary : he is *indignant*. Because it has yet to materialize—that dream of an educated class which will voluntarily take its share of the burdens at present borne (very unwillingly) by the under-dog. Even the most altruistic of us will (if we tell the truth !) confess to a sneaking tradesman-Toryism which revolts at the thought of cash payment for our professed ideals. In the face of this innate and shabby tendency (which the honest among us freely admit) the gods must have many a laugh at our indignation when the presumably even less enlightened classes, in their turn, attempt to safeguard *their* own interests. We like to think that what we really resent is their haste—their economic short-sightedness—their ill-considered conclusions. But too often our real resentment is that these people should essay to dally with " vision " at all : it might turn out to be so inconvenient that we regard such vision as dangerous. The Old Guard will always prescribe stones for the prophets ; and this Old Guard (if classified as such on account of certain primitive instincts

in regard to property) is by no means few in number.

The idea of aristocracy is founded on the honest assumption that there is a distinct, inherent difference between man and man. Democracy, on the other hand, assumes that such differences are wholly artificial, and are due only to a superior environment and better opportunities. Democracy altogether fails to take into account that, if environment and opportunity alone could be depended upon to produce human efficiency, we should not, in that case, have among our present privileged classes those incompetents and degenerates it so fervently denounces.

Aristocracy, however, if it pushed its faith in heredity to its logical conclusion, would have to admit that through the widespread illegitimacy of the last few hundred years the finer qualities which usually come by heredity may be discovered in the most unexpected quarters. The titled descendants of a royal mistress may have little more than a peasant's crude, physical attraction for which to thank their complaisant ancestress. On the other hand, the below-stairs progeny of our eighteenth-century worldlings may well be possessed of qualities and

intelligence quite beyond their present social status. No stigma of degeneracy attached either to the sexual promiscuity of the eighteenth century (condoned in those days by Church and Society alike) nor to the illegitimacy resulting therefrom. Biologically, therefore, even the cellar rat may have a better (inherited) capacity than the eldest son of the dukedom created by royal laxity. As a consequence, although we may hold as strongly as we please that the qualities necessary for statesmanship are likely to come *by heredity*, we shall do well to remember that too great an insistence upon this biological truism may take us (in our search for the " intelligent few ") altogether too far from the traditional covers. With this in mind, it is discouragingly obvious that in our present disputes the " Have-nots " may have some reason to show the bitter jealousy of the dispossessed. A climbing of garret stairs and a bombarding of cellar doors would be tactless in the present crises, yet there, thanks to the cruder recreations of our ancestors, is where too great an insistence on heredity as a *sine qua non* might lead us !

Our loyalty to the hereditary principle, however, is usually only lip-service. The worship

of material environment is our practice. From the great-grandson of a duke who won the love of a " little strolling player lass " we do not dream of expecting any statesmanlike qualities, even although history may record that the little player lass captivated the duke by means of native talent and mother-wit. The son that was born of this irregular union may have become an actor of talent, and *his* son a musician of note. If the present representative of the line, however, holds the position of editorial writer on a radical paper, we do not expect (and consequently do not find) any evidence of ducal heredity or " statesmanlike " qualities in his editorials. But from the duke's *legitimate* heir (whose mother was Lady Jane Sheepshanks, whose grandmother was another Sheepshanks, and whose great-grandmother, the duke's lawful wife, was also his first cousin) we expect, and therefore find, what satisfies our snobbish souls. This ducal baby's material surroundings make possible our faith and tint rosy our vision, so that too many of us will forthwith take his qualities for granted, and later on will vote accordingly. Yet, notwithstanding the material nature of this ducal halo, we have the amazing effrontery to claim that it

is " heredity " to which we are paying homage ! We are deaf to any suggestion that we are vulgarly dazzled by worldly environment. And if anyone accuses us of snobbishness we retort with some pleasantries about Bolshevism. Surely only a Bolshevist would boggle at a duke !

With the same rosy glasses which enable us to magnify into capacity for statesmanship the very average, jog-trot qualities of the duke's (legitimate) great-grandson, do we persist in viewing the peccadilloes of many a titled waster born in affluence and in wedlock. " Boys will be boys "—" we can't expect old heads on young shoulders." (We forget the factory districts, where we expect this, and more !) Many a young man (we tell ourselves) has sown his wild oats and then settled down. We ought rather to remember that, *since the race will have to reap those wild oats*, perhaps the smug " settling down " of the sower to poison his family line might better be prevented. If our gay young blade has proved himself unfit for responsibility, incapable of financial honour, handicapped by the mind of a moron and the tendencies of a degenerate, we are surely unwise to permit his spent middle

age to foist similar weaklings on the taxpayer; weaklings for whom the nation and the race must for ever after pay. Victorian sentiment preferred not to think about such things, and it is more than probable that to this prim hypocrisy we owe many of our unemployables of to-day. An awakened social conscience, however, refuses to believe that the mere accident of environment at birth should compel society not only to connive at the survival of the unfit, but actually to encourage it. The aristocracy of the future is likely to be composed only of those who have *shouldered* their responsibilities and have *proved* their fitness to lead. Such an aristocracy must have more to justify its tenure of power than the snobbish acquiescences of the classes below its own.

In bygone times, when labour was less productive, and when education was possessed by a scanty minority, an aristocracy based on property was obviously necessary in order that high thinking, and taste, and the graces of life might be safeguarded. It was best, therefore, in that primitive stage of society, that the labour of the many should guarantee opportunity for the few. To-day, when the need of leadership

in vision and toward the finer things of life is even greater (thanks to the sudden rise of the profiteer to affluence) the merely *political* necessity for such an aristocracy as we have to-day —based on birth and privilege—is less apparent. Our present privileged class has permitted a great deal of essential governing to be done without its co-operation (much less its suggestion !), and often even in the face of its opposition ! As an exceptionally truthful and uniquely humble member of the Labour Party admitted the other day : " It isn't what our fellows *are* that gets us the votes—it's what them toffs are *not !* " The dereliction of the peer is the opportunity of the demagogue. If an heredity peer uses his power as a lawmaker to evade his responsibilities as a citizen, that is just so much gain to the " reds." The aristocrat worthy of privilege must be a man of high purpose—a man who will no more put his personal interests above his public duty than a soldier on the battlefield will stand and argue about his right to live ! Profiteering in privilege is as dishonourable in peace as in war time.

The advantage of an aristocratic environment lies in the opportunity for *vision*. The aristo-

crat of theory, secure in his position, is unhampered by the conformities demanded in the suburbs. He is able to make experiments in his thinking which would be punished if made on a lower social level. His dissent from the mediocre-minded does not play havoc either with his reputation or with his income. It is obvious that the opinions of the professional man must be popular with his neighbours, else no one will consult him. It is obvious that the opinions of the merchant must be considered " sound," else that merchant will lose business. But it is open to the aristocrat to have vision—even if he is bound to be misunderstood. The middle-class mind must be crisp and reassuring ; the aristocrat can, if he chooses, hold unpopular opinions tentatively, while he waits for further evidence. In the meantime he can afford to be silent : a student of the larger issues of life. If his conclusions take him to the right or to the left he can follow them, since his prerogatives, as an aristocrat, permit him the freedom of eccentricity of opinion. *His living is not dependent on the approval of his fellow-men :* he is free, and because of this freedom, he is responsible.

The birthright of the aristocrat is liberty to lead. If this birthright is bartered for liberty to *play*, it is bound to result only in a dangerously privileged class necessarily opposed to reform, since any reform must (for it) mean a change for the worse. Caution—a sordid caution for the preservation of the *status quo*—then takes the place of courage, and what should have been respect paid by the classes below to a racial ideal is turned into a cheap and unjustifiable toadyism, or a bitter and intolerant antagonism.

But if the under-dog of our present social system is intelligent in his anxious efforts to *get something done*, he must stop making the mistake of attacking—*from the wrong side*—those whom he believes to be his enemies. His newspapers are chiefly responsible, as they pander to his weaknesses by fostering his delusions, and serve him, day after day, with silly backstairs fiction regarding what they please to call the profligacy and extravagance of the upper caste. In many evening papers of the working classes spicy little tit-bits of gossip find their way, and are eagerly devoured by those who, left to themselves, might not hate so bitterly. Lord Taxedmore is reported to

be holding " at one of his many country seats " revels in comparison with which an ancient Roman banquet would seem niggardly. That such revels lie entirely in the imagination of the hack writer detailed to supply such gossip never enters into the proletariat head. The thing is in print—in their own newspapers—therefore it must be true. Gambling, dissipation and imaginary frenzies of extravagance are all described in detail. The actual truth regarding the real nature of Lord Taxedmore's deficiencies as an aristocrat would seem tame in comparison.

To tell the proletariat (thirsting for tales of high life and low morals) that Lord Taxedmore was not revelling, but riding, yesterday morning, that he played tennis in the afternoon and billiards in the evening, would furnish no thrills of hate. To tell the proletariat that not one moment of this peer's day was given to " scheming to defraud the workers," but that his mental exercise consisted solely of interviewing his farm bailiff during the forenoon and nodding his head at intervals ; of telling two anecdotes before luncheon ; of quoting from the *Daily Diehard* at tea-time, and of holding a heated after-dinner argument as to Per-

simmon's chances to win—might even arouse a thrill of fellow feeling. " Blow me—if that ain't just what any bloke 'd do in 'is shoes—ride and get a game or two and then back 'is fancy of an evenin' ! " While to mention the " country seat " as a white elephant—uninhabitable, yet expensive even to keep shut up ; and unescapable, because entailed—might even cause an occasional growl of astonishment : " It ain't no fault o' 'is own, then, seein' the law wished it on 'im ! " Unfortunately, however, as regards the " Have-nots," the newspaper which attempted to encourage such friendly tolerances in place of offering its usual daily daggers would soon find itself lacking in circulation. The tired physique demands stimulants ; the tired mind demands excitement. The hate of the " Have-nots " is far oftener physical than mental, and State control of our food supply might go far toward safeguarding the tranquillity of the " Haves."

When feudalism lost its hold, many a fine old English gentleman bowed his head in the despairing conviction that England's day was done. Later, the invention of machinery dislocated society for many a long year, and the despoliation of the landowner which is now

taking place may set up in his stead merely the sordid plutocracy of the profiteer. Never was a responsible aristocracy of thought more needed—both for defence and for attack on the iconoclastic forces confronting the country. The ideal on which our social system rests (if it *does* rest on an ideal) is in danger of being forgotten by those who should have cherished it, and trampled by those who have been led to hate it. Even if this ideal has been naught but a poet's dream, this English system has achieved certain graces which the world can ill do without. But that a greater material good for a greater human number may *some day* wing its way from Utopia to reality is not enough. Intellectual progress is due to the leaven of the minority : we need leaders—we need an aristocracy—not of birth, possessions nor prestige alone, but of spirit.

Our first step must be a revision of thought as regards the aristocratic ideal. Our standard must be personal, and the hall-mark of such an aristocracy must be a sense of responsibility. Law and order are necessary to any stable order of society, and if a steady movement toward better organization and conditions *is perceptible*, it may be allowed, even by the

impetuous, to move slowly, with safety to much that is, at present, in peril. Our danger lies not in movement, but in torpor. The reforms of the future will be due to educated initiative, even if subjected to majority vote, and even this majority vote itself may be superseded if our intelligent few can demonstrate that privilege need not imply serene ignorance of conditions, and the selfishness which results from such ignorance.

History will repeat itself. Wider information and more enlightened public opinion must lead to industrial changes. It is illogical and absurd, however, to regard such inevitable changes with unreasoning dread, or unduly to idealize many of our present clumsy, complicated and inefficient political and industrial methods. State control will mean no new thing: as things are our Government uses Parliamentary means to interfere with individual liberties where necessary; and already, on the judiciary, do we appoint our intelligent few, and select them for the Civil Service by competitive examination. We pride ourselves on our talent for administration *in other lands;* but the time now seems to have come for us to demonstrate *what we can do at home.*

There is nothing sacrosanct about our present social, political or economic methods. When, and if, and as, we find we outgrow them, they must give way, as did the feudal system, for progress toward a more enlightened and civilized order of things. We must get rid of our needless nightmares: no revolution is proposed by the demand that in return for their privileges the educated and comfortable classes shall concentrate on devising such State and industrial machinery as may prove more efficient than those methods which have so signally disappointed us; or by the demand that these educated and comfortable classes shall consent to the installation of such machinery when decided upon—*no matter by what name it may be called*. The problem of the Great State is not only how to discover the best means of ascertaining the collective Will, but also to discover the best means of enforcing that Will when ascertained.

Since privilege, when neither earned nor demonstrably deserved, fosters illiberality, it is our educated rather than our privileged classes who are leading the way. Here and there, however, among the members of our present aristocracy of birth, are those who even now are

standing for progress rather than for privilege, and, as a consequence, are courageously facing bitter antagonism from their less-enlightened compeers. If, therefore, from the ranks of our existing aristocracy of birth a justifiable number of recruits can be found for the new aristocracy of spirit and of purpose, so much the better. Qualities that have taken generations to breed need not be wasted, provided that with them can be demonstrated the high personal standard and the sense of responsibility to the nation *as a whole*—that alone can justify the claim to leadership.

Majority rule has taken its place as modern machinery, but minority intelligence must furnish the driving power. Our new aristocracy of spirit must be able to furnish ideas—to suggest innovations. The demurs will always be forthcoming from that slow-thinking, over-busy, cautious majority—the tradesmen-Tories. There need be no sting in this commercial adjective : it carries, as we have shown, its own very human excuse. But our *leaders* must have learned to exercise their imaginations as regularly and as cheerfully as they had hitherto exercised their muscles.

As a nation we pride ourselves on our toler-

ance in our dealings with other nations. Our *in*tolerances we have reserved for matters at home : for our political differences ; for our class quarrels. We like to take sides, and we have not always troubled to find out just what the quarrel was about. We have too often construed our duty to be a dogged partisanship rather than any feverish search for truth. In order to learn tolerance, therefore, we must learn to keep in mind the atmospheric pressure behind—and accounting for—all opposition. The social chaos from which we are now suffering ought surely to have brought home the lesson that "*he who knows but his own side knows but little of that.*"

Change—if it is to be for the better—must come slowly. Even so, the transition stages will mean a certain amount of friction, and the possible loss of many fair and beautiful things that had no fault except that they cost too much when paid for by the drabness of other lives. "Slavery," it has been said, "tends to corrupt not the slave, but the master." It may be that the price paid for the enjoyment of these beautiful things—a certain lack of perception and bluntness of feeling in regard to human values—has cost the nation more in the deterioration of those who should

have been its leaders than in the deterioration of those who, while bearing a man's full burden, were condemned to over-sordid lives.

Under any ideal of leadership involving responsibility and pledged to straight thinking, we may reasonably hope that our individual efforts—political, economic and social—may unite to the end that victory may be gained over much human misery. Glaring economic injustices must cease to be accepted as necessary evils ; unemployment and occupational misfit must cease to be matters for shrug and epigram, and preventable distress must no longer be passed by on the other side. *We* are " organized society "—and it is our consent, as individuals, that does the " organizing."

Civilization, it has been observed, is merely a slow process of getting rid of our prejudices. An effort toward straight thinking is our first duty : after that has been achieved we may still pray for vision. As a nation, we move slowly ; as individuals, most of us prefer to stand still. It is failure to recognize this that causes the foreigner to wonder, the heathen to rage, and the impatient to hope for vain things.